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# BODHI

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# Editorial

It is obvious that academic disciplines travel beyond boundaries; nevertheless, the articles collected here can broadly be categorised into four themes: literary-cultural studies, media, education and social sciences. They reach beyond national borders for an inquiry into contemporary debates on Humanities and social sciences in the South Asian subcontinent. The present volume of *Bodhi* includes a textual analysis of a novel from India's northeast from a feminist perspective; an examination of media literacy among school headteachers in Kathmandu Valley; an economic model that helps the media sustain itself without crossing its ethical boundaries; an examination of a canonical text of economics from the communication perspective; and a critique of contemporary media practices amid Nepal's clientalist political structure.

The volume also contains interventions in the field of education, with an analysis of teacher educators' perceptions and experiences in professional development; secondary level teachers' professional development through research and development; new pedagogical approaches in the digital realm in a post-pandemic world; a phenomenological inquiry into the importance of emotional intelligence in faculty retention in educational institutions in Nepal; an exploration of academic leadership embedded in the Vedic teaching-learning practices in the Indian subcontinent; and a proposal for a posthuman pedagogy that incorporates human and non-human realities that promotes lifelong learning procedures. Finally, the volume includes interventions in the social sciences, with an analysis of internal migration and citizenship regulations

for Nepalis as they straddle administrative boundaries; a study of Dalit women's political participation in the eastern Nepali city of Biratnagar; a deep dive into the adoption of mobile phone-based agriculture application among smallholder farmers in a municipality in Kathmandu district; and an analysis of the role of women in the 1971 non-cooperation movement across East Pakistan against the oppressive Pakistani government. We believe that this volume serves as indispensable material in the advance of debates in the thematic areas and disciplines they cover.

We sincerely thank our contributors for trusting us with their articles and the reviewers for the timely review of the articles. When the next iteration of this journal reaches the tenth volume's landmark, we aim to make it even more special. Therefore, we invite academics and researchers across various fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences to contribute their articles to make *Bodhi's* next volume another leading light in our inter/multidisciplinary and transnational academic intervention.

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# Easterine Kire's *A Respectable Woman*: A Feminist Study

Tamishra Swain, PhD & Neha Chauhan

Women's position since time immemorial has been secondary, whether in Western or Eastern culture. Women are not only pushed to the margin in the cultural, social, or economic sphere but also in the literary sphere. With growing awareness, women asked for equal rights in every sphere of life, whether in political, social or cultural spaces. Considering the condition in the literary sphere, one can see how women's voices are never raised, or even if raised, they are never heard. However, by writing about their own experiences, women can represent themselves in a more accurate way, make their presence felt and challenge the mainstream writings mostly written by men. This paper tries to analyse Easterine Kire's A Respectable Woman from a feminist perspective.

**Keywords:** Subaltern, subjugation, gender, discourse, ideology

## Feminism

The term 'Feminism' is not a unitary concept, so it is difficult to give its fixed definition. However, in order to define feminism, Lisa S. Price, in Feminism Frameworks: Building Theory on Violence against Women (2009), says, "Feminism is a method of analysis, a standpoint, a way of looking at the world from the perspective of women. It questions government policies, popular culture, ways of doing and being and asks how women's lives are affected by these ideological and institutional practices" (p. 6). Similarly, Pramod K Nayar, in his book entitled Contemporary Literary and Cultural

Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism (2009), opines that "Feminism in its historical trajectory, has examined the nature of language- which excludes women, or forces them to write and think in a language over which they have no control" (p. 131). Arpita Mukhopadhyay rightly said in her book Feminisms (2016) that "Feminisms address the issue of women's inferior position in society and seek ways and methods of alleviating the social-cultural, political and economic discriminations that women are subjected to" (p. 1).

Hence, many theorists provide multiple definitions of feminism. Chaman Nahal, in his article "Feminism in English Fiction" (1991), defines feminism as "a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome, whether it is the husband or the father or the community or a religious or ethnic group. When women free themselves of the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materialises" (p. 20).

The major idea behind the concept of feminism is that, for ages, women have been pushed to a secondary position by patriarchal social discourses. Social tradition only keeps women under control. It is apt to quote Simone de Beauvoir, who firmly believed that: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine." (1975, p. 34) In order to establish their own identity, women have to break themselves from the patriarchal ideologies that they internalised and which are handed down to them from generation to generation.

The history of the modern Western feminist movement, as suggested by Maggie Humm, is divided into three "waves". All three feminist waves deal with different aspects of the same feminist issues. As it is rightly said, "The origin of feminism as a movement is diverse, depending on specific oppressive practices across time

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and space. While women have offered resistance against exploitative practices for centuries, feminism is a concerted political movement" (2016, p. 2).

In the first wave of the feminist movement, women asked for equal and legal rights. An important book written during this time by Mary Wollstonecraft entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) is the precursor for such suffragette movements. In this book, she advocated for equal social and moral rights for women. The second wave feminist movement roughly started in the 1960s and addressed issues such as women's employment, role in the family, sexuality, and political rights. There are some major writings produced and influenced by the second wave: Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, published in 1949; Elaine Showalter's *The Literature of their Own*, published in 1977; and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, published in 1969. The third-wave feminist movement was a continuation and reaction to the second-wave feminism. This movement addresses the issues of differences of women according to race, nation, ethnicity, etc. The female sufferings cannot be accommodated into one category as the sufferings are different in different cultural and geographical spaces. For example, the Western feminism propagated by the first and second wave does not accommodate the experiences of black females, third-world females, etc. "Any attempt towards putting feminism into neat little categories is doomed to fail since feminism is not monolithic." (2016, p. 11). Similarly, literary scholars believe that the fourth wave of feminism, which started roughly around 2010, is associated with technology like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networking. Campaigns like "Every Sexism Project" and "Me Too movement" are associated with it.

**Naga Literature**

There are many different ethnic groups in Nagaland, each with its own language, culture, identity, and way of life. The area

is viewed as peripheral and distinct from the rest of the nation and is widely regarded as a homogeneous entity. There has been a lot of unrest in the area, including political unrest, cultural upheaval, religious unrest, and issues relating to natural resources. Due to the lack of knowledge about Nagaland, it is geographically as well as psychologically distant. However, with the efforts of various authors, the region is now becoming an area of research interest. Bhagat Oinam and Dhiren A. Sadokpam (2018) in Northeast India: A Reader writes: "In recent times, the region is no more 'a strange or a distant land' to the average educated Indians. From a state of tabula rasa, Northeast India has now become a mosaic of multiple impressions. However, it is to be noted that many of these impressions are hinged on stereotypical imageries." (p. 1). Various non-fictional authors, such as Sanjoy Hazarika and Sanjib Baruah, highlight the problems of the region. The fiction writers of the region Tilottoma Misra, Indira Goswami, Mitra Phukan, Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Sumita Ghose, and Mamang Dai intend to portray a holistic image of the region and the people.

Retracing the traditional roots is one of the important identity markers for the Naga community. So, story-telling and narrating folk poems are often employed by the writers from Nagaland. As rightly pointed out by Veio Pou, Kire's stories "powerfully captivate the readers with her style of narration, which is deep-rooted in the storytelling tradition of the Nagas. Even in this novel, her effort to reconstruct the memory of the past is in the true spirit of the Naga oral culture wherein there is a conscious passing down of stories of the people to the younger generation" (2020, p. 63). The adoption of the language and blending of folk elements has become the Naga writer's distinctive quality. North-East Indian literature is vibrant and multidimensional, incorporating themes of borders, boundaries, identity, locations of home and culture, and oral tradition. These themes are often indigenous in nature and exclusively discuss

community-specific indigenous knowledge and ethics. In one of her interviews, Kire said:

> We writers from North-East India have to struggle for visibility much more than writers from other formerly colonised countries. It is because mainstream Indian publishers and festival organisers either try to subsume us under Indian writing or ignore our presence, which happened in the 1990s. Now that many North-East Indian writers are beginning to be internationally recognised, they can no longer do that. In fact, North-East India is trending, and many big publishing houses are eager to pick up North-East Indian writers. Becoming part of the mainstream Indian canon might have the advantage of getting more readers. But I don't believe that. We are too different to blend into the body of Indian mainstream writing smoothly. North-East Indian writing will always stick out. So, it's a good thing to be seen as different because we are different, and we have different literary experiences to offer. Of course, many areas we write about are similar and universal because we are writing about human experiences, but there is something that is uniquely North-East in the flavour of our writing. (2019, p. 7)

## Easterine Kire: An Introduction

Dr Easterine Kire was born in 1959 in Kohima, in the Angami Naga family of Nagaland. She studied in Shillong and later did her PhD at Savitribai Phule Pune University. Kelhoukevira is the very first book of poems in English by Kire. The 2003 A Naga Village Remembered was another landmark: the first novel from Nagaland. This book was a historical novel describing the resistance of Khonoma against British troops. It was the first Naga novel to appear in English and received the Hindu Prize. Later on, she published novels like *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), followed by *Mari* (2010), *Bitter Wormwood* (2011), *Don't Run, My Love* (2017) and *Walking*

*the Roadless Road: Exploring the Tribes of Nagaland* (2019). Her latest book, Spirit Nights, was published in 2022. She has also written children's books, articles and essays. Watitula Longkumer narrated, "Kire writes in English and is the author of several books, including poetry and short stories. Kire's creative works specifically address the Naga indigenous community to which she belongs and deploy its social, cultural, and political narratives as backdrops to her stories." (2019, p.1) Kire faced lots of opposition from the government for her fearless comments on the Nagaland political situation. However, she moved to Norway long back in the year 2005.

Easterine Kire's works inculcate a sense of cultural identity and historical consciousness about Nagaland. Her works include poetry collections, folktales, short stories, children's books, and novels. In *Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2003), she inculcates deeper into the battle of Khonoma, which took place between the British and the Nagas. Along with the battle, detailed cultural intricacies and the love for Mother Nature in Nagas, especially the Angamis, have been depicted marvellously. In Mari (2010), she recollects the horrific battle between the Japanese army and the British army during World War II. She narrates the story through the diary of her aunt Mari, who was a witness to the war. She explained the effects of war on Kohima and the aftereffects of the war on the minds of the people. *Bitter Wormwood* (2011) is a story of two friends reminiscing about the old days when they fought over a decade for Naga Independence. The political scenario, violence, racism, and extremism are well portrayed in the novel. The novel traces the degradation of the Naga society caused by factional killings and political unrest. *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2013) covers three generations of women. The rigid and discriminating behaviour of Grandmother Vibano towards Delieno is shown. Grandmother is a symbol of the transference of patriarchal rules and norms, which she wants to inculcate in her granddaughter. She wants her to be a

docile, meek, and obedient Naga wife. Son of the Thundercloud (2016) revolves around a myth of the son of the Thundercloud who takes birth to avenge his father's death. The plot is short and interesting. The novel is full of supernatural aspects of Naga culture and their closeness to nature. The novel includes themes like myth, magic, supernaturalism, magic realism and innate Naga wisdom. In a sense, Easterine Kire highlights Naga consciousness and Naga identity by using memory.

## Summary of the text

*A Respectable Woman* (2019) is the story of war and loss. The novel describes the Japanese invasion of Kohima during World War 2 and how it affected the scenario and the state. The novel revolves around the bitter memories of the war and the transformation of the victims. The novel showcases Angami Nagas and covers the early years of the protagonist, Kevinuo, who lives in Nagaland, where modernity and development are taking place. The novel is narrated from the perspective of Khunuo, the narrator's mother, who was ten years old when the invasion took place. The novel shows the evil in society after the battle, implying a focus on alcoholism, young deaths, and intolerance in people.

*A Respectable Woman* is a bildungsroman novel that discusses post-war Kohima involving Angami women of two generations with different world views. Similar to the novel *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2003), this book is a memory novel based on the clash between the British and Nagas in the 19th century, set during the Japanese invasion of Kohima during World War II and the post-war years. The whole narration of *A Respectable Woman* was told by Kevinuo, who narrated the stories she heard from her mother, Khonuo, who was ten years old at the time of the Japanese invasion of Kohima. Initially, the readers come across the memories of Khonuo's fragmentary history of war before 44 years. She recounts

to her daughter the devastation of the war, the displaced family, and the rebuilding of the homes and lives of the Kohima people. Later, the narration changes towards contemporary Nagaland and its problems, including social, cultural and political.

After the war, Kire writes about Azuo and her sister being reluctant to join the school. For girls like these, the missionaries came up with a plan to teach them how to bake cake, how to pray and how to speak English. In short, these girls are taught how to be respectable with the English language, etiquette, manners, etc. It also makes the reader understand the relationship between British administrators and Naga tribes. After Independence, the missionaries left India. When the last missionary family leaves India, Kire writes, "Reverend Supplee was a musician who had written songs on Kohima which were sung by different generations of Nagas in later years. Ruth Supplee, the missionary's wife, was frequently sick and would spend days confined to her bed. Many people were sad to see them go" (Kire, p. 23). She evokes a similar sense of abandonment felt by many Nagas upon the final departure of the administrators: "The village people were saying, 'Our parents are leaving us'. It was said with sadness and a sense of helplessness" (Kire, p. 23). Kire also discusses the conflicts and atrocities of the Indian Army. Kire also demonstrates with great insight how lives go on – from weddings to funerals – even in the middle of a crisis. It is a testimony to human resilience and, at other times, resignation in the absence of better alternatives to appreciate the little things that have been the story of several pockets of the North East at various points in history.

In the second half of the book, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the contemporary issues of Nagaland. One of the issues is how alcoholism creates a major problem for youth. Kire masterfully writes about how the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1989 came into place, weaving in the challenges that alcohol-related violence places on Kevinuo's oldest friendship and an eventual

life-changing decision. Kire also discusses insurgency movements by indigenous groups.

**Women's Marginal Voices**

A Respectable Woman narrates the battle of Kohima, which took place in 1944 in Nagaland. The drastic social and political changes were very evident in Nagaland. Through their written representation, various feminist theorists such as Elaine Showalter, Kate Millet, Virginia Woolf, etc., uplifted the thought and idea of women's rights and made women realise their secondary position in society, whereas men control society by taking the primary position. These Western feminist theorists raise women's consciousness and their problems. In India, feminist writers and theorists strive for gender equality, which includes fighting for equality in pay, equality in the political sphere, and equality in the sphere of education and health. They have also highlighted how the patriarchal Indian society strangles women and forces them to conform to the patriarchal mindset.

As time passes, the condition of women in India has improved gradually in mainland India, but if we shift our focus towards the women of Northeast India, we can see them struggling for their rights, and they are unable to voice their opinions. There are various tribes in Nagaland, each having their own dialects. The tribal culture of the Nagas does not consist of problems such as the dowry system, child marriage, etc. Due to the lack of these social problems, in comparison to the women of mainland India, the Naga women are freer and more empowered. But as one dwells deeper into the Naga society, it is clear that the Naga women are marginal. They are marginalised in the social order and in the political sphere as well. These issues of marginalisation of Women have been addressed aptly by Easterine Kire in her novel *A Respectable Woman*. Kire articulates in an interview that "There are many things in Naga society that are liberal and positive; education for children regardless of gender,

encouragement of girls taking up professionals or studies formerly dominated by boys, a healthy acceptance of non-conventional roles and professionals" (Kire, 2019, p. 389).

In the novel, Kire represents a raw image of the Naga society and how the patriarchal order is maintained in Nagaland, including customary laws and inheritance. She gives various household examples to which one can easily relate and understand. To her surprise, not only men but women also contribute to maintaining the patriarchal order in society, and according to them, it is normal.

From her early years, the narrator has seen and heard various things, which made her feel the secondary position of women in the household as well as the society. The discussions and conversations in her family, at school, in public areas, etc., gave much prominence to having a husband, getting married, and starting a family. The discussions also include a girl's social and moral code of conduct, instructions and restrictions regarding her behaviour in society. Kevinuo was appalled when she witnessed that an eighteen-year-old girl got pregnant and was terminated from school and from social and religious gatherings as well. She was not seen as A Respectable Woman anymore. Institutions, such as society, religion and educational places, therefore, work as controlling tools to subjugate women.

Kevinuo's mother once said, "Once she is married, we consider her to be her husband's property" (Kire, 2019, p. 103). The ladies accept domestic violence instead of helping and safeguarding women from this abuse. They accept it as something normal and acceptable and consider a woman to be her husband's property. These women have seen similar patterns in their households and believe in the same ideologies. These examples and instances from daily activities justify what Simon de Beauvoir mentioned in her book *The Second Sex: "Woman is not born but becomes one"* (p. 301). Born as female sex, but after the implication of social and cultural oppositions, she

becomes a gendered subject and a woman. Culture imposes the performative aspects on a woman, what Judith Butler explains about "performativity" and how it influences one's identity. According to Bulter, "Gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a "doing" rather than a "being" (1990, p. 25).

According to Foucault, the discourse controls the identity. Discourse is created by power. Powerful people and positions; power may be mental or physical; hence, the discourse created by men dominates the discourse; therefore, they control identity. Identity is controlled by the tools of dominance such as culture, education, law, politics, religion, rituals, etc. These tools create what Althusser calls 'interpellation' in one's identity, which makes the masses believe that the interpellated form is a natural way and one must not question the performance of their respective roles in society.

In The *History of Sexuality*, Foucault states: "Where there is power, there is resistance" (1990, p. 95). Resistance is not always expressed through violence and opposition. In the text, Kevinuo is a non-conformist and challenges society by standing firmly on her ground, negating the institution of marriage. She raised her voice against domestic violence against women and took a stand against Beinuo's husband and threatened him: "You won't get away with this. You murdered her!" (Kire, 2019, p. 143). Later in the novel, she shows another example of bravery and non-conformity by adopting Beinuo's daughter Uvi. The ending of the novel leaves a sarcastic dialogue from the narrator: "I am 35 years old now, a registered spinster. My chances of becoming a part of a respectable society through marriage are very slim, or are they? My rich, old widower has not shown up yet. We still have a little laugh about that, saying he will finally come hobbling with his walking stick apologising for the lateness" ( p. 161). She frees herself and creates a counter-narrative for society by creating a life for herself by being a single mother and a spinster. Her strong

decisions and boldness of character intimidate society and make her an inspiration for more Naga women to stand up for the evils in society and make a difference by empowering themselves.

## Conclusion

Kevinuo is presented as a docile, meek, obedient Angami girl at the beginning of the novel, and later, one can see her growth as a mature person. After graduation, she started working at a school in Kohima. Seeing the situation of married women around her, she rejected the institution of marriage and aspired to lead an unmarried life. Kire represents marriage as a chain for women that strangles around a woman and takes away her freedom, happiness, opinions, and desires. Through the protagonist of the novel, Kire portrays the image of an Angami woman who refuses to conform to the traditional notions set for a woman. She adopts her friend's daughter Uvi and sets an example that a woman can successfully bring up a child outside of marriage. The book sets an example of how education liberates women and makes them empowered and stand firm in their opinions and decisions.

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# Media Literacy: A Survey among Headteachers of Community Schools in Kathmandu Valley

Govinda Dhital

This study has aimed to measure the level of media literacy among headteachers of community schools in Nepal and examine the relationship between their communication behavior and their awareness of media literacy. The study focuses on the level of media literacy among headteachers and the contribution of headteachers' media literacy to their communication behavior. The study considers demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, academic qualification, teaching experience, and training to achieve the expected outcomes. The population of this study includes 295 secondary-level headteachers of community schools in Kathmandu Valley, and a sample of 170 headteachers were randomly selected from three districts. The collected data were analyzed using inferential statistics, and reliability, validity, and ethics were considered at each stage of the research. The findings indicate that headteachers are not sufficiently aware of the influence of media on their job in general, but there is a positive relationship between media literacy and communication behavior among them. Female headteachers felt recognized and had good relationships with colleagues, while older headteachers were less literate about media. Headteachers with higher qualifications and training were more literate with media and more communicative with subordinates and students. The study suggests that headteachers should constructively engage in building their schools, develop a social network, and maintain autonomy in their decision-making process to support the quality improvement of community schools. Therefore, the study

recommends that stakeholders of the school consider the knowledge development, autonomy, and media literacy of headteachers to improve communication, collaboration, and quality of education in community schools.

**Introduction**

The basic definition of media literacy (Aufderheide, 1993) is the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes. Aufderheide further explains that a media literate person should have the opportunity to become one that can decode, evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media (Aufderheide, 1993).

Media literacy is the capacity of gathering, understanding, and evaluating resources disseminated by the media. The ability to critically access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages is crucial in the process of becoming an informed and engaged citizen throughout life (Schilder & Redmond, 2019). The modality of media literacy has gained wide popularity with the transition from the 20th to the 21st century. The concept of media literacy emphasizes its critical nature, and puts forward the skills required to access messages, critically understand them, and to actively use a variety of instruments and formats for generating original messages (Botturi, 2019). Media literacy also depends on the academic qualifications, abilities, and understanding of the audience (readers, listeners, viewers). According to Schilder and Redmond (2019), media literacy is a field of study with over fifty years of history in the United States. Yet it has only recently become a focus of national attention. Similarly, Media literacy is gradually increasing in Nepal.

The media literacy movement seeks to create greater awareness and empowerment on the part of the human receiver, whether child or adult, in the school or outside of it (Aufderheide, 1993). Teachers have placed a premium on psychological considerations and human behavior such as appreciation, cooperation, consultation, respect, fairness, confidence, and motivation. Because the concepts and topics are often focused on human interactions, school leaders' behavior should be impacted by leadership and communication considerations. The communication behavior of an individual is dealing with practices of communication attributes within the institution.

The overall school system in Nepal is taken as the process of producing educated human resources that ultimately plays a major role in the progressive development of the nation. In this regard, appropriate and updated leadership is vital in the pedagogical process of academic institutions (Nikolopoulou, 2020). The pillars of the future are being instructed by the teachers who are assumed to know, and they are taken as role models. Hence, the knowledge and behavior they impart in and around the classrooms have been followed by their students.

The growing pattern of media in the world is influencing our lifestyle day by day. The school system is a place where the impact of media can be seen very prominently. The bureaucracy of a school system is another part that influences the whole teaching-learning process in Nepalese community schools (Danai, 2021). Even the learning process and teaching methodology are becoming a part of information technology in the school system. Students in this context are always aware of the information provided by different media. The teacher and the management of the school system are also aware of the power of the media. They construct the knowledge by utilizing the resources like audio-video, print, and online media (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Even social media like Face-book and others have ultimately influenced the teaching-learning process in both positive and negative ways.

The Coalition for Community Schools defines community schools as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources, integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement (Maier et al. 2017). They further explain community schools which are grounded in the principle that all students, families, and communities' benefit from strong connections between educators and local resources, supports, and people.

According to (Maier, 2013), within the education system of Nepal, there are two types of systems imparting the formal type of education in the country. They are community (public or government) schools and private schools. Ministry of Education of Nepal further categorizes community schools into aided community schools which receive regular government grant for teacher's salary and for other administrative purposes; and, unaided community schools, which do not receive a regular government grant, but are financed with support from community, donations from other sources and school's own resources (Parajuli & Das, 2013).

According to policymakers and academics, media literacy is defined as "the ability to access, understand, and evaluate media-related dynamics and communicate adequately within these forms" (Bulger, 2012). As per Schmidt (2012), media literacy in education has evolved as a movement to assist individuals of all ages in acquiring the abilities required to communicate in the modern world. Media literacy is a concept and practice necessary to help citizens be informed and empowered in a world increasingly populated with diverse media and messages (Cho et al., 2022).

The head teachers of Nepalese community schools are not only the leaders of the particular school but also the change agent of the community by sharing the knowledge of education and every aspect of society. People are aware enough about the political situation and other social behavior but the teaching and learning process can

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only be dependent on the schools' system as they believe that the knowledge is only constructed in the educational institution. So, the schools' leaders are under social pressure to always be ready to disseminate the information and knowledge to the people.

The media has played a vital role to enhance knowledge and update the situation which is happening in society (Basheti et al., 2021). The part of disseminating the knowledge and information through students and other stakeholders of the schools' system depends on the strength of head teachers and their level of understanding of media. But the school system has not accepted the power of the media in most of the schools. This is all because of the knowledge of a leader or manager and different perceptions toward the media. Most of the school leaders are using media without knowing their impact on the students and society (Beemt, Thurlings & Willems, 2020).

## Method, Study Site, Population and Sample

Survey research is widely regarded as being inherently quantitative (deVaus, 2002).  This method is suitable to collect a large amount of quantitative data from the field.  Hence, I used this method to collect data for this study.  The questionnaire was used as a key tool for collecting the primary data. The research, therefore, was dominant of quantitative nature.

Roopa and Rani (2012) define questionnaire as simply a list of mimeographed or printed questions that is completed by or for a respondent to give his/her opinion. The survey method is conducted in this research where the headteachers of secondary level public schools were selected as the respondents. The printed questionnaire was distributed to many of them. A few of the respondents received questionnaires via email. The similar type of research was conducted by Rady (2014), from where the questionnaire was developed for my research. The questionnaire was modified according to my

research questions. The questionnaire comprised the respondents' general information, including gender, age, marital status, academic qualification, ethnicity, teaching experience, as well as other personal factors used in the conceptual framework. The set of questionnaires both in Nepali and English are kept at the end of this article in Annex-1.

The questionnaire also contained the aspects of the level of media literacy. It was measured by a 5 points Likert scale. Based on 5 points Likert scale, responses from the secondary level headteachers of community schools of Kathmandu Valley were ranked as:

Table 1

Measurement Scale of Media Literacy Level

| Literacy Level | Score |
| --- | --- |
| Highly Literate | 5 |
| Literate | 4 |
| Neutral | 3 |
| Illiterate | 2 |
| Highly illiterate | 1 |

The required data were collected from public schools of Kathmandu valley of Nepal. The quantitative data were collected by using questionnaire forms for different stakeholders of the school system. The systematic questionnaire form was developed and distributed during the field visit. Mostly the questionnaire forms were provided to the school's leader; the headteachers, principals, coordinators, and other teachers. During collecting the data, some of the headteachers were absent and the responsibilities were given to the coordinator or in some cases to senior teachers as well. So, the questionnaire form was also given to those who were taking the responsibility of headteachers. At the same time, some of the community schools are running as an English medium school, though most of them are not. Those English medium community

schools have a principal instead of a headteacher. So, headteachers and principals have the same role and responsibilities in community schools of Kathmandu Valley.

The access and impact of media are most prominent in urban areas but the rural areas of Nepal are still lacking access to media like television and the internet. Because of geological variation in Kathmandu valley, the access and uses of media in community schools are obviously varied. The appropriate use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in the classroom fosters critical, integrative and contextual teaching and learning; develops information literacy viz. ability to locate, evaluate and use information (Kharel, 2018). According to Kharel, ICTs improve the overall efficiency of the delivery of education in schools and educational management institutions at the national, state/provincial and community level. Hence, the use of ICTs in education aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as democratize the access to education. On the other hand Kharel (2018) stated the data of the Ministry of Finance of Nepal regarding the access of media and internet in Kathmandu Valley. The data shows that the access of media like Television, Radio and internet service, mobile and computer in the rural areas including the Kathmandu valley is still lacking. So, the access and impact of media are most prominent in urban areas but the rural areas of Nepal are still lacking access to media like television and the internet. Because of geological variation in Kathmandu valley, the access and uses of media in community schools are obviously varied.

The population of the study represented all secondary school head teachers working in community schools within Kathmandu Valley. According to the Flash I Report (Department of Education [DEO], 2015), approximately 295 head teachers are working at the secondary level in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. To make the study easier from the access point of view, the study population was

further limited to the headteachers working in the secondary level of community schools of the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts). The following table shows the population and sample by district.

**Table 2 Sample Size of the Study**

| District | Number of public schools | Number of Head Teachers | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kathmandu | 173 | 173 | 100 |
| Lalitpur | 78 | 78 | 46 |
| Bhaktpur | 44 | 44 | 24 |
| Total | 295 | 295 | 170 |

(Source: DEO, 15)

The purpose of selecting a sample representative of the population is to generalize the sample to the population. Schools were assumed as the sources of sample and all the secondary-level headteachers were the sample units. The sample size was determined using the formula for proportion.

Yamane (1967) discovered a formula for determining sample size. As shown below, the formula was used to calculate the sample sizes. And,95% confidence level and P =0.5 are assumed for equations.

Here, "n = N/ 1+N (e) 2where 'n' is the sample size, 'N' is the population size, and 'e' is the level of precision".

n = 295 / 1+ 295 (.05)2 = 295/1.737 = 169.83 = 170

This study implemented a survey strategy to collect data from the field. According to Walliman (2001), stratified random sampling techniques give the most reliable representation of the whole population (p. 239). Schools are divided into various sub-groups (strata: Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) sharing common characteristics like age, sex, academic qualification, and ethnicity. A random sample is taken from each district (strata). According to Acharya, et al. 2013, the advantages of stratified random sampling

are it assures representation of all groups in the population needed and the characteristics of each stratum can be estimated and comparisons can be made. Hence I chose to adopt the technique of random sampling. To select 170 samples from the population, the respondents stratified randomly based on the districts. The samples were selected by lottery method from each district i.e. 100 from Kathmandu, 46 from Lalitpur and 24 from Bhaktapur.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

The way of analyzing the quantitative data was completely statistical. To analyze the data, systematic statistical procedures were adopted. For this, the SPSS software was used. After analyzing the data and testing the hypotheses, the result would or would not be substantiated by the population. If the null hypothesis was rejected then the researcher's hypothesis i.e., the alternative hypothesis would accept and we could say that the media literacy of headteachers in public schools makes the school system different and media literacy was the part of leader quality in the school system.

The three levels of media literacy were identified: low, medium, and high. I divided the mean score into three categories to represent the level of media literacy among faculty members: high, medium, and poor. The mean of media literacy was used to determine these levels, which were classified as Low (1.00-2.33), Moderate (2.34-3.66), and High (3.67-5.00) based on their mean scores. The following are the three levels of categorisation derived from Best's criteria:

$$\frac{Higher\ score - Lower\ score}{Number\ of\ Levels}$$

$$= \frac{7 - 1}{3} = \frac{6}{3} = 2$$

To present the level of the ML of HT of the community school in Nepal, the researcher utilized percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

## Correlation Analysis

Researchers in the social sciences endeavour to analyse and explain the nature of interactions between various dimensions, variables, and items while studying data. Correlation analysis demonstrates the relationships between two or more variables. According to Sekaran (2003), correlation analysis demonstrates three critical characteristics of data: significance, direction, and magnitude. The numbers of associated variables or dimensions were used to categorize basic forms of correlations or connections such as bivariate or multiple correlations between variables and dimensions. Bivariate correlations, also known as symmetric correlations, were non-directional in nature, whereas asymmetric correlations were multiple correlations. In order to understand the direction and relationship of the values in the current study, bivariate correlation analysis with a Pearson correlation matrix was utilized to examine how the dimensions of media literacy and communication practices were related to each other.

The CB is the collective form of leadership, communication style, feedback, task-oriented interaction, social interaction enthusiasm, and Technical task uncertainties. For this purpose, the correlation between the predictors of media literacy and communication behavior of HT in the community school was investigated using correlation analysis.

Table 3

*Correlations between Media Literacy and Communication Behavior*

| Media Literacy | Communication Behavior | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Leadership | CS | Feedback | TI | SI | Enthusiasm | TTU |
| Access | 0.06 | .29** | .27** | .27** | 0.05 | .16* | .18* |
| Retrieve | 0.11 | -0.01 | 0.04 | .22** | -0.02 | .17* | .16* |
| Understood | 0.04 | 0.11 | -0.12 | -0.01 | -0.02 | .26** | .40** |
| Communication | 0.10 | .17* | .23** | .36** | 0.11 | 0.11 | -0.04 |
| Analyze | 0.08 | .31** | .33** | .25** | 0.06 | .17* | .17* |
| Evaluate | .22** | 0.01 | 0.03 | .42** | 0.12 | .36** | .40** |
| Create | -0.01 | -.16* | 0.10 | .23** | 0.10 | -0.05 | -.24** |

*: Significance at 0.005 Level, **: Significance at 0.001 Level

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CS: Communication Style, TI: Task-Oriented Interaction, SI: Social Interaction,

TTU: Technical Task Uncertainty

From the analysis of the correlation between media literacy and communication behavior as presented in table 10, Spearman's correlation coefficients between media literacy and communication behavior have a low degree of positive ($\rho = .057$). However, the result is significant, $p = .024 < .05$) at 5% level of significance. The correlation's findings show that there are correlations between all seven aspects of media literacy and seven dimensions of communication behavior at various levels, ranging from very low to moderate. (1) 0 to 0.2, extremely low correlation, (2) 0.2 to 0.4, low correlation, (3) 0.4 to 0.6, moderate correlation, (4) 0.6 to 0.8, strong correlation, and (5) 0.8 to 1 high correlation, according to Bartz (1999).

Bartz (1999), the relationship of leadership was low (.22) with evaluation. Likewise, the relationship of communication skill was low with access (.29) and analysis (.31); and very low with communication (.17) and creation (.16). In the same way, the relationship of feedback is low with access (.27), communication (.23), and analysis (.33). The relationship of the task of interaction is moderate with evaluate (.42); and low with access (.27), retrieve (.22), communication (.36), analyze (.25), and create (.23). There is no relationship between social interaction and dimensions of media literacy. The relationship between enthusiasms is low with understood (.26) and evaluate (.36); very low with access (.16), retrieve (.17), and analyze (.17). Likewise, the relationship of the technical task uncertainty is moderate with understood (.4), evaluate (.4); low with creating (.24); and very low with access (.18), retrieve (.16), and analyze (.17).

**Regression Analysis**

The correlations between the variables were explained using regression analysis. According to Chatterjee and Simonoff (2013),

regression analysis is the process of identifying the statistical relationship between two or more variables. Regression analysis is used to forecast the connections and interrelationships between dependent and independent variables. Regression analysis is classified into two types: basic and multiple regressions. The following formula represents the basic relationship in a simple regression analysis.

$Y = \alpha + \beta X$

Where Y = the dependent variable; $\alpha$ = constant;

$\beta$ = the beta coefficient; and

X = the independent variable.

For the robustness of empirical findings, multiple regression analysis requires several assumptions to be met. Multiple regression analysis takes into account more than one independent variable, allowing the magnitude and direction of the association to be determined. The following formula represents the link between several regressions:

$Y = \alpha + \beta X1 + \beta X2 + \beta X3 + \beta X4 + \beta X5$

Where Y = the dependent variable; $\alpha$ = the constant;

$\beta$ = the beta; and

X1 – X5 = the independent variables.

The current study used multiple regression analysis to determine the interrelationship between the dimensions of media literacy and communication behavior in headteachers.

The regression analysis was also used to look at the impact of the head teachers' media literacy on their communication behavior. To investigate the role of media literacy, a multiple regression analysis was used (access, retrieve, understood, communication, analyze, evaluate and create) to communicate behaviors (leadership, community-style, feedback, task oriented interaction, social interaction, enthusiasm, and technical task uncertainty). From the data presented in table 4.

## Table 4

Regression Analysis of Media Literacy and Communication Behaviour

| Media Literacy | Leadership | CS | Feedback | TI | SI | Enthusiasm | TTU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access | -0.21 | 1.87 | 2.71* | 2.05* | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Retrieve | 0.24 | -1.78 | -0.79 | -0.30 | -1.32 | 0.24 | 0.76 |
| Understood | -1.21 | -1.62 | -4.75* | -4.59* | -0.96 | 0.92 | 2.76* |
| Communication | 0.95 | 3.37* | 2.99* | 3.36* | 1.18 | 0.49 | -1.18 |
| Analyze | 1.17 | 3.69* | 5.35* | 4.29* | 1.17 | 1.38 | 0.53 |
| Evaluate | 2.87* | 1.56 | 0.65 | 6.08* | 1.61 | 4.11* | 5.16* |
| Create | -1.21 | -3.33* | -0.14 | 0.37 | 0.52 | -1.50 | -3.50* |

CS: Communication Style, TI: Task-Oriented Interaction, SI: Social Interaction,

TTU: Technical Task Uncertainty

Only one of the seven independent factors of media literacy, evaluate, was found to be relevant for leadership at a 5% level of significance, according to the findings in Table 11. In the same way, communication, analysis, and creation were found significant with communication skills at a 5% level of significance. For Feedback, it was found significant with access, understanding, communication, and analysis. Similarly, task-oriented interaction was found significant with access, understanding, communication, analysis, and evaluation at 5% of the significance level.

It was found that social interaction was found to have no significance with none of the dimensions of media literacy. The Enthusiasm was found significant with evaluation at a 5% level of significance. Similarly, technical task uncertainty was found significant with understanding, evaluating and creating.

### Findings and Results

This study identified a moderate level of the overall level of media literacy. According to Zhang et al. (2020), media literacy education is subject to the highest developmental emphasis in individual European Union countries. For communication behavior,

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the level of media literacy was high, and for access also it was high. Likewise, the level of retrieval understood, communication, analysis, and evaluation was moderate. In the case of creation skills, there was a low level of media literacy among the HTs. According to Levitskaya and Fedorov (2020), numerous studies prove that media education can give positive results in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in terms of analysis and critical reflection of media and misinformation. So, the literature supported that with the lack of media literacy education in the Nepalese school system, the creative skills of headteachers became low.

This study also addressed the relation to the media literacy of HTs by their personal characteristics. This study found a significant relationship between age with media access and communication; access, understanding, analysis, and evaluation with gender; retrieval with qualification; and understanding with media training. Age is an important factor in school administration as it influences the authority and experiences of the headteacher (Mbunde, 2018).

Similarly, this research was related to the relationship between media literacy and the communication behavior of the headteachers. This study found that there is a correlation between media literacy and the communication behavior of the HTs of a community school. There was a statistically significant and positive strong correlation between head teachers' ICT literacy and ICT integration in human resource data management (Choge, 2019).The multiple regressions identified the linear relationship of communication style with communication, analysis, and creation; feedback with access, understood, communication, and analysis; task-oriented interaction with access, understood, communication, analysis, and evaluation; enthusiasm with evaluating; and technical task uncertainty with understand, evaluate and create.

## Discussion

Communication behavior theory analyzes information in multiple fields of social sciences and human skills concerning interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. According to Mbunde (2018), higher levels of education correlate with levels of productivity; qualification and experience enhance the head teachers' expert power, credibility, confidence, and decisiveness in managerial practice. The study showed that the power of critical thinking after having a higher level of educational qualification became stronger than leaders having a lower level of educational qualification.

The findings of this study reveal that most of the secondary level school head teachers in community schools of Kathmandu Valley are moderate in media literacy, and only a very small number of head teachers areliterate with media. Cappello, Felini and Hobbs (2011) aligned with my findings. According to Cappello, Felini and Hobbs (2011), many developments in recent educational and media research may lead to this depoliticization/ under-theorization of media literacy education. Among them, two are particularly significant here: the discovery of the "active" audience and the rapid expansion of digital media in educational contexts. The head teachers are also the leaders of schools and they have a key role in leading the organization. This study shows that a high level of communication behavior helps them to solve work-related problems in school. According to Share, Mamikonyan, and Lopez (2019), schools or educational institutions are responsible for training. The new wave of teachers must be up to date, not just with the latest technology, but more importantly, with critical media literacy theory and pedagogy. Educational institutions like schools need to prepare teachers and students to think and act critically with and about media and technology.

Despite the numerous benefits of media & information literacy for students in today's digital society. Gretter and Yadav (2018) suggested that the lack of teacher preparation in teaching media

and information literacy skills creates a gap between the societal rationale for students becoming media literate and the sustainable preparation of teachers. According to Weninger (2017), media literacy in Singapore serves primarily as a policy tool aimed at optimizing the population's workforce value and regulating a rapidly developing communications landscape through various initiatives that emphasize skill and downplay creative expression. This study shows that trained headteachers are practicing media literacy very well compared to untrained headteachers in the community school of Nepal. Weninger's findings (2017) also align with this finding.

This study shows that the mature and experienced teachers were only in the leading position of a secondary-level community school in Kathmandu Valley. The study showed that very few young professionals were leading the community schools as headteacher. This figure portrayed that some headteachers were updating their educational qualifications to improve their leadership skills and enhance their knowledge.

This study also shows that media training was not compulsory for headteachers of community schools in Nepal. But they have attended the media-related training for their own interest. This is because of a lack of training curricula related to the media. But, on the other hand, most of the headteachers were trained by different trainings related to their professional and leadership development. According to Mbunde (2018), the problem-solving techniques of headteachers in schools, who were involved in training, make headteachers more effective and efficient in management.

This study showed that the level of communication behavior of headteachers of community schools in Kathmandu Valley is high. The high level of communication behavior reflects that they solve work-related problems in school. According to Tyler (2016), high-performing schools' leaders have good communication behaviour, which is aligned with my findings.

This study shows a significant relationship between the age of headteachers of community schools in Kathmandu Valley with media access and communication. The study also establishes the relationship among the parameters of media literacy like access, understanding, analysis, and evaluation with gender. Cappello, Felini, and Hobbs (2011), aligned with this study. They agreed that the school leaders and communities, when grown up in the media, shape the set of skills. Cappello et al. (2011) further explained the relationship of media society with the competencies of people. Similarly, the headteachers had a significant relationship in retrieving the media content with their qualifications. The headteachers of the community school of Kathmandu Valley also had a significant relationship of understanding with media training.

This study also explains the existence of a correlation between media literacy and the communication behavior of the headteachers of community schools. It identifies the linear relationship of communication style with communication, analysis, and creation. Jarvis (2012) explains media learning as a lifetime phenomenon through which people develop skills. He also highlights the power of media knowledge that builds certain qualities and becomes more competent than before. The headteachers are good enough in communication style and can communicate with different media and analyze the media contents. Jarvis (2012) also aligned with this research. Jarvis (2012) explains that a good communicator has the skill of analyzing media content as well. They also have a good communication style that creates the media content in different media. There is also a linear relation of feedback with access, understanding, communication, and analysis. The headteachers give good feedback when they have access to different media.

Task-oriented interaction has a linear relationship with access, understanding, communication, analysis, and evaluation to evaluate parameters that directly affect the task-oriented

interaction of headteachers in community schools of Nepal. They explain in terms of opportunities for studying interactions of technological developments and disruptions, (inter) disciplinarily, and sociopolitical transformations. It shows the strong relationship between enthusiasm with media evaluation, meaning that the headteachers who can evaluate the media are enthusiastic. The technical task uncertainty, one of the major parameters of communication behaviour, has a relationship with three parameters of media literacy i.e. understanding, evaluating, and creating skills of headteachers in Nepal. Rady (2014) in aligned with this finding. Heexplained that acquiring awareness comes from learning media literacy skills to deal with media messages.

**Conclusion and Implication**

Schools can identify their strengths and priorities to improve academic achievement, communication behavior, and the capacity to manage educational organizations. School leaders may provide media training to enhance the media literacy skills of headteachers, teachers, and students, and create media-friendly environments with well-equipped media labs, media libraries, and other necessary equipment.

Schools play a critical role in reforming the education system, and the effective use of media can facilitate academic innovation and development. Schools need policies that encourage headteachers and stakeholders to leverage various types of media, including digital media. The use of media can enhance communication performance, improve leadership style, and ultimately improve society's educational standing.

Media literacy directly impacts the personal and professional development of the headteachers of community schools, also developing their leadership capabilities. The level of media literacy of headteachers is influenced by their academic degree, age,

information retrieval capacity, and training. Policymakers, academic institutions, and school leaders should understand the complex interrelationship between media literacy skills and communication behavior to enhance academic achievement. Overall, media plays a crucial role in the creation of new information and schools need to invest in media infrastructure, training, and accessibility to improve communication among all stakeholders including the headteachers.

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# An Economic Model of Media Ethics

Prajjwal Dhungana

Ethics and economic profits are considered to be trade-offs to one another. Akin to other disciplines, private media face the same dilemma. Pursuing more economic profit through increased viewership, advertising rates, or other practices usually comes at the cost of diminished ethical compliance. However, many studies highlight the importance of ethical guidelines in increasing revenues and profits in media organizations. This article aims to reconcile previous scholarship on the subject and develop an economic model of media ethics. The model is based on the literature and methodology of public economics, particularly that of public goods and externalities. It predicts that private media firms, when left to the perfectly competitive market, produce a greater quantity of news that may not be socially desirable and is of low quality and poor ethical compliance. When the social cost of producing ethical and quality media products is considered, the revenue of the private firms decreases, thereby suggesting an inverse relationship between ethical compliance and profits. This demands a case for libertarian paternalism, nudges, or incentives to restore private firms to the socially optimal equilibrium to ensure independent, ethical, free, and sustainable media.

## Introduction

Ethics and economics have become two separate entities. Although modern economics historically developed as an off-shoot

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of ethics, it has turned self-consciously non-ethical (Sen, 1999, p. 2). Most businesses of the present day focus heavily on achieving their profit-maximizing objectives through any means of their disposal. This has led to an unprecedented rise in the unethical measures firms deploy to extract profits from their consumers, including manipulation and exploitation of employees, unfair competitive prices, manipulation of the code of conduct, and fake public disclosure, among others (IvyPanda, 2022). Hence, the trade-off between seemingly disparate concepts demands critical study in all kinds of businesses- media being one of them.

Media is the fourth estate of democracy, as put by Edmund Burke (Carlyle, 2013), which underpins its role as a people's watchdog. However, the rapid globalization and diversification of media, media convergence, and the conglomeration of the majority into a few hands have led to a massive fall in profits. It has often limited money to be the bottom line in the media industry (Luna, 1995). Small media houses, including new entrants, tend to be experiencing extreme economic stress, thereby subjecting the necessary ethical compliance to serious risk. Moreover, the availability of multiple media platforms – offline and digital, with limited licensing and censorship has exacerbated the probability of unethical media practices in the quest to earn profits (Dolunay et al., 2022).

Some unethical practices in media include indecent advertising, smear campaigns, invasion of privacy, fake news, conspiracies, cultural debasement, collusion with political groups and businesses, and so on (Ivypanda, 2021). Media, on the one hand, can be a principal in advancing one or more of these unethical practices to fulfill its vested interests– maximizing profit being one of them. On the other hand, it can act as an agent of some political or business elite in the pursuit of their interests. Whatever the case, serious consideration of ethical compliance in media, given its nature of producing a public good under critical scrutiny, is deemed necessary.

Ethics is one of the many variables of the news story function (Luna, 1995). Like the event, reporter, medium, and audience, ethos or ethics affect the news story along with these components in a bidirectional way. Unethical practices may increase the accounting profit of the media companies in the short term. However, the opportunity cost, which includes decreased community respect and reputation and loss of autonomy, among others, may subdue the company's future prospect with decreased economic profit (Primeaux & Stieber, 1997).

Furthermore, journalism and similar media products are public good (Pickard, 2021). Thus, it demands the role of government to ensure whether or not these goods are in the interests of the public. Using the same token, these goods might generate positive or negative societal externalities. In the lack of necessary ethical compliance, these products are sure to amplify negative externalities, thereby deteriorating the very fabric of society, not only the media house's business.

Hence, media with its peculiar function and different nature of goods and services it offers to society – might respond differently to the subject of ethics against profits than other businesses do. With continuous short-term and long-term public and government threats, ethical dishonesty and other unethical practices become highly costly in media. This is what demands a separate study of the economics of media ethics.

Cost-benefit analysis of ethics through the economic model of supply and demand of news media from the methodology of public economics is the primary objective of this article. It is a theoretical paper that attempts to study the effect of ethical compliance on the economic revenue of media, thereby generating essential policy recommendations.

The model predicts that private media firms, when left to the perfectly competitive market, produce more news that may

not be socially desirable, resulting in low quality and poor ethical compliance. Considering the social cost of producing ethical and quality media products, the revenue of the private firms is decreased, thereby suggesting an inverse relationship between ethical compliance and profits. This demands a case for libertarian paternalism or nudges to restore the private firms to the socially optimal equilibrium to ensure independent, ethical, free, and sustainable media.

This article is divided into the following sections below. First, the Literature Review section summarises all the existing economic models of media ethics and their explanation of the subject. Second, the Model section proposes an economic model of media ethics based on previous literature and findings. Third, the Discussion section elucidates the workings of the model and its nuances. It also offers possible explanations and policy relevance. Next, the Limitation section highlights the possible caveats of the developed model and considerations needed for the interpretation. Lastly, the Conclusion section sums up the article.

## Literature Review

A large and growing body of literature has proposed different models of ethics theory and reasoning (Meyers, 2016). In particular, scholarship in media ethics has ranged from media sociology, philosophical explication, universalism, moral relativism, pluralism, logical positivism, and others (Plaisance, 2011). Among many factors determining media ethics, increasing economic pressures have been crucial (Martin & Sounder, 2009). Many ethical theorists have scrutinized disputes between the economic interests of news media and the duty to serve society (Blevens, 1995). This has led to an advancement in different economic models of media ethics. The economic model of media ethics developed by Luna (1995) can be considered the benchmark. The study places ethical decisions by

the news industry on the supply-demand curve, where ethical behavior is quantifiable via a z-score ranking approach, as suggested by Whitlow & Tubergen (1987). The equilibrium is achieved when news organizations supply the exact amount of ethical behaviour as demanded by the consumer. In contrast, a shortage of ethical behavior in the model occurs when the consumer demands greater ethical behavior than the news organization is supplying, while a surplus results when the consumer is supplied greater ethical compliance than demanded.

Another study (Souder, 2010) proposes a new model of media ethics by integrating Adam Smith's free market theory and his system of moral reasoning. The conditions in the model's media system are analogous to that of the economic system, where wealth is substituted for information and the market of goods and services for the market of ideas. It demands the crucial role of moral obligations for maintaining the integrity of the system for anyone who wants to profit from it.

Similarly, many studies, although not providing an entire theoretical model of the economics of media ethics, are important. For instance, Jackson (2009) applies commodification theory to news whereby the clash of capitalistic and journalistic imperatives is synthesized to offer regulatory reforms and ensure ethical journalism. Another study (Blankenburg, 1995) suggests management's role in harnessing virtue to increase profits under a specific budgetary constraint.

Despite the burgeoning amount of literature on the subject, there has been little consensus on whether the ethics and profit motives of the media are directly associated or otherwise.

For example, Luna (1995), using her model of demand and supply of media ethics, argues that ethics can be used to prevent potential losses and increase profit in media. The disengagement of a particular news organization from its ethical foundations may result in a decreased audience, thereby decreasing revenue. Along with the monetary costs of ethical divergence, the firms face non-monetary

costs, including decreased reputation, autonomy, accountability, and effectiveness.

Similar findings are highlighted by another study (Vanacker & Belmas, 2009). Applying Meyer's influence model from Meyer (2009) suggests a positive correlation between journalistic excellence and economic success, thereby resulting in increased public trust in news media. According to them, owners of successful media organizations would continue to invest in important projects for the community, reinforcing the trust, ensuring the public's time, energy, money, and trust in their products.

A similar line of thought is advocated by Souder (2010), who argues that moral compliance maintains the integrity of the media system for anyone to profit from the system. With his model mentioned above, a system of the free press produces reliable and ethical market information as the market for goods and services creates wealth. In the same way, a study by Morant (2005) supports the strengthening capacity of ethics in the successful economic progress of a media organization. It is argued that corporate or private interests include only one segment of pluralistic democracy. Corporate influence and benefits, particularly in the context of media organizations become reliant on the aspirations and support of the served public thereby requiring the private benefits to be in due consideration of the public needs. This requires the media organizations to be ethical to ensure public support and a higher economic gain. The triad of profit, audience size, and credibility is emphasized as an operational criterion, thus limiting the existence of media organizations without ethical practices.

In contrast, a vast amount of literature exists, highlighting an indirect relationship between ethical compliance and economic incentives.

Jackson (2009) underpins the threat of commodification of news as mentioned above. Moral or ethical failure results when

journalism or other media products are treated as a commodity, ultimately seriously threatening democracy. The study claims that the public interest quality of a story of commercially produced news is often inversely related to consumer demand. With the amoral values of a free market and the moral agency of a free press regarded as incompatible, the research asks for regulatory mechanisms to check the predatory nature of the free market system in news media. Similarly, McManus (1922) highlighted the inability of news consumers to discern the quality of news. As a credence good, the problem of asymmetric information leads to market failure. Media organizations may opt for unethical practices to fulfill their pecuniary motives of profit maximization. Furthermore, McManus argues that the deterioration of the quality of news leads to negative externality. Market-oriented news stakeholders seek news with high entertainment value as these kinds lure large audiences and may result in larger profits.

Another study (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002) argues that the prime objective of the news in the age of media has been to enrich the corporate parent rather than stimulating the public debate. The demand for ratings pulls journalism toward the commercially lucrative features while also shirking away from risky and costly investigative studies. The same study reports a deliberate increase in soft news. A survey by the Pew Research Center in collaboration with Columbia Journalism Review (The Pew Center, 2000) with nearly 300 journalists and news executives found that more than one-third (35%) of respondents mentioned that news hurting the financial interests of a news organization often or sometimes goes unreported.

With multiple conflicting theses and theories in the literature on the economics of media ethics, this article aims to resolve this issue by offering a simple economic model of media ethics. This gap in the literature is what this paper aims to address, examining whether

ethical compliance in media organizations increases or decreases economic profits and thereby generating policy recommendations.

**Model**

For simplicity, news media–the central component of media–is used for analysis. Similar analysis can be used to analyze other components of media. Before proceeding to an economic model of news media ethics, it becomes necessary to state some assumptions for clarity.

1. **Nature of the news market:** The market is perfectly competitive with private ownership of news media with the primary objective of earning profits. Public ownership of media may demand a different scholarship outside this article's scope. In the news media market, as Souder (2010) discussed, informed citizens, a free press, democracy and information take the place of virtuous citizens, a free market, perfect liberty, and wealth, respectively. The case of information asymmetry, as pointed out by McManus (1992) in the context of news, is vital in determining the quality of the news as the quantity increases.

2. **Nature of the news as a commodity:** Although the news has been regarded as a contested commodity (Jackson, 2009) when left to the free market, it is realistic to consider news as a public good (Pickard, 2021). As a public good, news can be considered both nonexcludable and non-rival. The public good nature of news results in market failure due to negative externality as news organizations in quest of their private interests of profit-making, produce news with low public value, reducing the public welfare (McManus, 1992b).

3. **Nature of Demand:** In private ownership of news media, as McManus (1992) suggested, the probability of an event or issue becoming news is directly proportional to the expected appeal of the narrative to audiences advertisers will pay to reach. In

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commercially produced news, the public interest quality of the news is often inversely related to consumer demand (Jackson, 2009). Generally, news products have been considered relatively elastic (Lacy, 1989). An increase in the price of the news product results in a similar decrement in the quantity demanded, as news is not a necessary commodity.

4.  **Nature of Supply:** News production experiences substantial economies of scale, with the first copy of news costing a significant portion of the total cost. The average cost of producing news falls with an increased quantity produced (Ludwig, 2000).

Fig 1: Supply and Demand of news
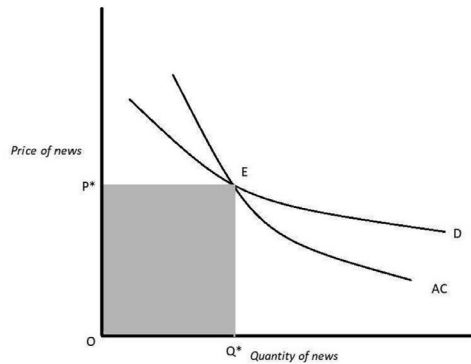


Figure 1 provides the supply and demand of news under the assumptions (1-4). The demand (D) and average cost(AC) curves intersect at the equilibrium (E). P* provides the equilibrium price of the news under perfect competition, while Q* gives the equilibrium quantity of news. Area (P* O Q* E) provides the revenue under the equilibrium condition E.

Under assumption 2 of public good, a negative externality is associated with the above market. This is why the news market produces more news than is socially optimal. Considering the social cost of news production, which includes ethical compliance as a

major aspect, the average cost curve(AC) shifts to the left to AC1, as shown in Figure 2 below. The quantification of ethics in news media is conceived as put forth by Luna (1995). Although we may not precisely calculate how much ethical compliance increases from AC to AC1, ethical compliance is undoubtedly higher in AC1 than in AC. The demand curve is assumed constant to facilitate static analysis (Mankiw, 2021, p. 190).

Fig 2: Supply and Demand of News with Social Cost
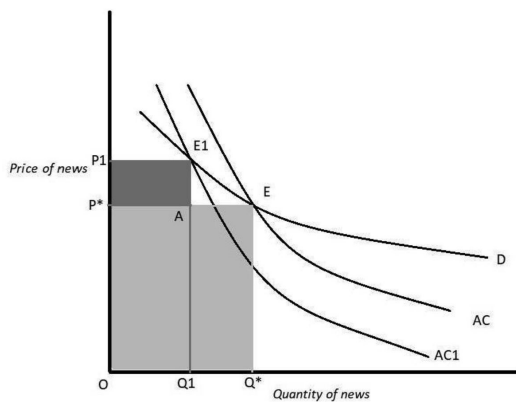


With the average cost shifting from AC to AC1 (social cost of producing the news), the equilibrium price increases to P1, and the equilibrium quantity decreases to Q1. Revenue is provided by (P1 O Q1 E1) in this situation. Whether it is greater than the initial market equilibrium depends on the relative area of (P1 P* A E1) and (A Q1 Q* E). With the nature of news as a commodity, the demand and supply curve, as stated in the assumptions, the latter area is greater than that of the initial one.

Thus, with higher ethical compliance, it can be found that private news organizations have to forgo a specific portion of the revenue (A Q1 Q* E - P1 P* A E1) than they would have earned without considering the social cost of producing news.

**Discussion**

The primary implication of the proposed economic model of media ethics concerns the quantity of news produced by private news organizations. Private news organizations tend to overproduce news due to the nature of news as a public good. When left free to the market, they face cut-throat competition, forcing them to produce any type of news at their disposal at low costs. On one hand, they attempt to compensate for the low cost of a piece of news by increasing the volume of similar news thereby causing excessive production. On the other hand, the tendency of each news organization to be the first to report every event of interest to the consumer leads to a large quantity of news.

The quality of news, as the quantity increases indiscriminately, is crucial. Although perfect competition gives rise to high-quality products at low cost, news products differ. As mentioned in Assumption 1, there exists a gap in knowledge regarding the quality of news between firms and consumers. This information asymmetry provides an advantage for the news media firms to cash on the ignorance of the consumers by offering them low-quality news in disguise. Moreover, a haphazard proliferation of news automatically reduces the incentive for news firms to consider quality along with ethical compliance in news-making practices. At the same time, as most of the revenue for news firms comes from advertisers, there is an unspoken executive contract in their favor exploiting the ethical capital for whatever reasons of their interest.

Multiple ailments in news media ensue due to excessive competition and commercialization, degrading the quality of news. When news media fall prey to specific vested political or business groups, also known as media capture, the tendency of fake and sensational news, conspiracy theories, defamation, and so on rises at the cost of ethics it should be complying with. Enormous technological advancement in online news and digital publishing

has further contributed to the multiplication of news portals with an undue mandate of producing any quantity of news at almost zero marginal cost. This has made discipline even more arduous in the new age of news media.

According to the second implication of the model, the revenue of news media decreases when the social cost of producing news (ethical compliance) is taken into account. Thus, examining whether the private news media becomes willing to incorporate the social cost and move their way towards more quality and ethical news becomes interesting. In other words, is the situation with ethical compliance achievable independently by the perfectly competitive private firms?

Without any incentives, no news media firms will increase their cost to produce a socially optimal quantity of news. For instance, if a private firm increases the cost to enhance its ethical compliance by recruiting a research and quality assurance team in their organization, its sales decrease, and so do the revenue and profits. This may lead to the shutting down of the firm in the long run when it regularly becomes unable to cover its costs.

However, the circumstances become different when incentives arise. Let's say the public values the quality of news stories of the firm and increases their demand, whatever the cost (relaxing assumption 3). The firm not only sustains but also experiences increased revenue and profits. This is what most researchers, including Luna (1995), argued in favor of ethical compliance increasing profits and revenue. But it can be tough to assume all public to be homogenous and behave in the same way in the presence of information asymmetry as discussed already.

Similarly, different legal and regulatory conditions, along with financial support from the government and community, can act as an incentive for the news firms to maintain ethical compliance and hence curtail the excessive production of news.

In other words, in a perfectly competitive news market, point E is a stable equilibrium, i.e. when left to the market forces, the private news market produces Q* quantity of news at the price of P*. However, as discussed above, Q* is not a socially optimal quantity of news that can be reached in the presence of adequate incentives from the public, government, or community, which is one of the most important implications of the model. It should be noted that the socially optimal equilibrium is unstable, i.e. news market can remain at that point until the necessary incentives are available.

The ideas of the economic model of news media ethics can be employed in the case of other media as well, as long as they fulfil the stated assumptions. Now onwards, we will discuss the implications of the model in the purview of media as a whole. With the help of a purported economic model, the article claims first the need for public support of media organizations, second the alignment of incentives for their sustainability and last, a safety net to fall back on at times of crisis to ensure ethical production of media products.

Publicly supporting news media for varied reasons–quality assurance and ethical compliance is one of them–is not new. Many developed countries have different mechanisms to incentivise media to produce a socially optimal quantity of news with adequate ethical conformity. A study by Linnebank & and Nielson (2011) surveys public support for the media in six countries: Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some incentives include indirect subsidies to private firms using Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions, reductions on single-copy sales, and subsidized postal rates.

Similarly, in his bachelor thesis, Hauksson (2012) presents a short overview of public support in six other countries: Sweden, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, and Iceland. The study finds that VAT for newspapers and other media publications in Sweden is reduced to six percent from 25 percent (For general

goods). In addition, Sweden also has a provision of a twofold direct subsidy system, one on the basis of production and the other aimed at distribution. Other countries also have a similar set of public support systems ranging from direct and indirect subsidies to VAT exemptions primarily aimed at ensuring quality, diversity, plurality, and accountability in news media.

In addition to developing necessary conditions for producing a socially optimal quantity of news, incentives aimed toward publicly supporting media help their sustainability as well. Many media organizations, to produce quality and ethically sound news, may fail most of the time to ensure a critical mass of consumers or may not attract enough advertisers willing to fund the sort of news they are producing. Moreover, this also inhibits the opportunities for business and political collaboration which can be a major source of revenue for them. As a result, they are forced to shut down and leave the market which can be devastating for the social welfare as a whole. Thus, a minimum threshold of funds provided to each media organization – an example of public support– can prevent such closure. The modus operandi of the funding structure, whether through the government itself or a commission, can be the subject of another article. Besides, it also diminishes the need for any media organization to depend on external sources to produce news, making them more independent, accountable, and accessible.

## Limitation

Although the model offers concluding arguments with strong policy recommendations about media ethics, it has a few limitations. It only models the behaviour of private media organizations with profit maximization as their primary objective. Last, it lacks an empirical model to test the potential hypotheses generated by the theoretical framework on which the researcher is currently working.

## Conclusion

Media is always held as an essential pillar of democracy. However, extensive commercialization has made most of them like other businesses that seek profits rather than truth and ethics. This has raised a pertinent question of whether ethics is a tradeoff media organizations face in today's capitalistic market. As implied by the economic model of media ethics, necessary incentives or nudges are required to help media organizations produce a socially optimal quantity of news away from what the free market asks them to do. It also provides a cushion for independent media organizations to be sustainable without relying on any external funding sources. To sum up, media organizations are not inherently free and may get dissuaded from their heavenly task of informing democratic citizens, demanding a case of libertarian paternalism to persuade them to get back on track.

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# Approaching *Kautaliya Arthashastra* from the Communication Perspective

Nirmala Mani Adhikary, PhD

Political thoughts on good governance from the Hindu perspective are set by Dandaniti, which is guided by Dharma and Artha in a continuum. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has been one of the most influential sources of political thoughts in Hinduism since over two millennia. The treatise deals with wide-ranging subject matters including politics, economics, governance, administration, philosophy, and so on. Though the emphasis on Artha is self-evident in *Arthashastra*, the common guiding principle for all affairs of statecraft as envisioned by Kautilya is the concept of Dharma. For instance, raja-dharma, the duty of the King or the ruler, is discussed at length in the classic text. As evident in *Arthashastra*, Hinduism envisions close interconnection between peace, politics and religion, in which politics guided by Dharma is instrumental for ensuring peace in society. This classical treatise can be approached from the communication perspective, employing certain indicators.

**Key words:** Arthashastra, communication, Dandaniti, Dharma, Hinduism, Hindu polity, political communication

## Background

By virtue of its rich discursive tradition, the Sanskrit knowledge system has a far broader scope of study corpus than explored as of now (Adhikary, 2013). In fact, studying Hindu perspectives on communication at the onset needs a broader outlook because diverse

and enormous sources are available. *Kautaliya Arthashastra,* that is Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, is an addition in this regard. A checklist for exploring classical Sanskrit texts from the communication perspective has been presented and discussed (Adhikary, 2014, 2015). The checklist consists of following indicators:

1. Intrinsic qualification
2. New insights
3. Indigenous theorization
4. Cultural identity consciousness
5. De-Westernization
6. The philosophical and cultural foundation of society
7. Multi-disciplinary nature of communication discipline
8. Multiculturalism
9. Promotion of comparative study of communication

In order to explore *Arthashastra* from the communication perspective, the classical text can be examined against the above-mentioned indicators. Such an endeavor has been fruitful in the case of *Natyashastra* (Adhikary, 2014) that has resulted in the theoretical construction of the Sadharanikaran model of communication and Sancharyoga theory. The present article approaches *Arthashastra* to explore its intrinsic qualification to the communication discipline.

Hinduism and Political Thoughts

The term "Hindu" is used for a wide range of meanings, including the nomenclature of the civilization, culture and religion as well as the philosophy rooted in the Vedas (Adhikary, 2012, 2016). "Hinduism should be viewed as the consummation of different Vedic and post-Vedic schools of thoughts - from extreme spiritualism to extreme materialism and as custom, rituals and traditions that have acted and reacted upon each other, giving rise to a sense of oneness" (Adhikary, 2012, p. 68). Hinduism is extensive and pluralistic with a sense of oneness that facilitates a common Hindu identity.

In fact, "Hinduism is characterized by the vast number and diverse approaches of Hindu religious-philosophical texts, the discourses of different schools of philosophy, the existence of different sects and cults, and the multiplicity of practices among Hindus" (Adhikary 2016, p. 831). However, such vastness, diversity and multiplicity has not hindered Hindus from living as common inheritors of the ancient civilization. And, the basic principles are same irrespective of the differences in caste, sect, cult and so on. For instance, the notion of a set of four goals of human life (Purushartha-chatushtaya) - namely, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha - is common to all practicing Hindus.

The Purushartha-chatushtaya is considered all-encompassing umbrella concept that includes all purposes and goals of human life envisioned in Hinduism. Each of these Sanskrit words has multiple meanings. For instance, Dharma refers to eternal rule, inherent nature, cosmic rule, duty, righteousness, virtue, law, and so on. Artha refers to all worldly things and Kama is based on pleasure due to Artha. In other words, Kama is sensual pleasure. Moksha is the highest attainment beyond the time and space that may be Moksha-in-life or Moksha-after-life (Adhikary, 2014).

The political thoughts on good governance from the Hindu perspective are set by Dandaniti - "the science of polity or government" (Ghoshal & Basak, 1993, p. 452), that is guided by Dharma and Artha in a continuum. This is why, the issues pertaining to polity, political system, governance, rule of law etc. in Hinduism have been dealt as the subject matters pertaining to Dharma and Artha. Hence, ancient Sanskrit texts called Dharmashastras (treatises on Dharma) and Arthashastras (treatises on Artha) consist of contents in this regard along with other areas of concern. Of them, Arthashastra has a more detailed discussion "as the branch of knowledge which deals with the acquisition and preservation of dominion" (Ghoshal & Basak 1993, p. 451) or

"the science which treats of the means of acquiring and ruling the earth" (p. 461).

According to Hinduism, Dharma guides each and every individual and all the institutions including the State. In particular, there is concept of raja-dharma, which literally means duty of the king, and connotes the duty of the State. The concept of raja-dharma envisions "the administration of the State to such a degree of perfection as to enable the king and everyone of his subjects to pursue undisturbed the paths of dharma, artha and kama" (Aiyar 1993, p. 502). The State, according to Hinduism, is believed to have been evolved primarily for ending anarchy (Matsya-nyaya) (Sircar 1993, pp. 509-510), and to ensure the rule of Dharma through Dandaniti. The foundation of political thoughts in Hinduism revolves around Dandaniti, and its ultimate objective is to uphold the law of Dharma; not in the sense of religion, but in the sense of duty/righteousness.

## Political Communication in Hinduism

In ancient Sanskrit literature, Dandaniti, Rajaniti, Rajadharmashastra, Arthashastra, etc. are the terminologies that were used to refer to the science of politics (Vidyalankar 2001, p. 19). Whereas the independent treatise on political science were written later on, the political thoughts in Hinduism are rooted in Vedic texts. Thoughts on polity can be found in Vedas themselves, and Brahmana texts such as Aitareya Brahmana have rich insights in this regard (see: Gajendragadkar 1993, pp. 420-421). Keith (1993) and many other scholars have already presented an account of Sanskrit literature to appraise the existence of the science of politics in ancient time.

The scriptures known as Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras also consist of norms regarding polity and statecraft, especially under the theme of raja-dharma. For instance, Manusmriti has chapters on raja-dharma that "might easily have formed an independent treatise on polity (Mitra 1991, p. 340). Other Smriti texts also have relevant

insights. The two great epics - Ramayana and Mahabharata - consist of "sound political and economic theories for good governance" (Mitra 1991, p. 341). Particularly, the Shantiparva section of Mahabharata provides enormous resource with regard to political thoughts of ancient times. Purana texts too incorporate stories and teachings through which they present ideals of governance and socio-economic justice under the theme of raja-dharma.

This is to note that many scholars, including P.V. Kane, seem to "take the view that Arthashastra is really a branch of Dharmashastra, since the former deals with the responsibilities of kings, for whoms rules are laid down in many treatises on dharma" (Gajendragadkar, 1993, p. 430). However, in latter day Hinduism, Arthashastra and Dharmashastra have been two closely related, but remain independent disciplines, as "the Arthashastra was dealing with secular law and approached the consideration of relevant questions from a purely secular point of view, whereas Dharmashastra considered the same problems from an ethical, religious or moral point of view, and gave effect to the notions on which the Hindu social structure was based" (Gajendragadkar, 1993, p. 430). And, Arthashastra is considered the text that specifically deals with Dandaniti.

It is a widely held fact that there were a number of treatises on Artha (that is, Arthashastras) before Kautilya's Arthashastra (Keith 1993, pp. 451-452; Vidyalankar 2001, pp. 21-24). Kautilya mentions a number of scholars and schools of thought developed even before Arthashastra, but it is only Kautilya's treatise that still survives. It is considered the last classical work in the field of political thoughts in Hindu milieu. It "is unquestionably one of the most interesting works in Sanskrit" (Keith, 1993, p. 452).

For about 24 centuries, it has been the most influential source book for political thought in Hindu society and hence provides foundation for political communication. As Pillai (2017,

p. 4) observes, "Imagine a book being on a bestseller list for 2,400 years and still going strong!" He further writes, "There were many Arthashastras written before Chanakya. And there were many more composed after him. But Kautilya's Arthashastra still stands strong. It has survived the test of time, and has become a classic" (p. 11).

## An Outline of Kautilya's Arthashastra

In Arthashastra, it is clearly mentioned in the last verse that the treatise was authored by Vishnugupta (Luitel 2011, p. 485). According to the classical Sanskrit text Abhidhana Chintamani, the following were the names of the same individual: Vishnugupta, Kautilya, Chanakya, Vatsyayana, Mallinaga, Dramila, Pakshilaswami, and Angula (Vidyalankar 2001, p. 26). Of these names, Chanakya and Kautilya are the most known. Traditionally the treatise is widely referred to as "Kautilya's Arthashastra", rather than just mentioning the title of the treatise.[1]

This text is considered a product of the fourth century B.C. and has been one of the most influential treatise in the East, although it had once gone into oblivion. "This work was long lost and was known only from quotations and from reference to it by later authors. However, ... the full text of the manuscript was recovered and published in 1909" (Mitra 1991, p. 336; also see: Gajendragadkar, 1993, p. 428). Since then, it has attracted many scholars of the East as well as West.

Arthashastra consists of 15 adhikaranas (Books) that are divided into 180 prakaranas (sections dealing with a specified subject matter) fitted into 150 adhyayas (chapters). Some chapters contain more than one prakarana. All together, there are 6 thousand sutras. These sutras are mostly verses, and these are sometimes interspersed by prose.

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1    The authorship of other famous texts *Chanakya Niti Darpana* and *Vatsyayana Kamasutra* (or *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana) are also popularly ascribed to the same person.

The focus of the fifteen books can be presented as following:

1. Book One mainly deals with various aspects of the preparedness (including discipline and education) of a king and his team. The very first adhikarana presents a chapter outlining the contents.
2. Book Two mainly concerns with the running of a bureaucratic and security system of government at the time.
3. Book Three deals with the branch of civil law.
4. Book Four deals with various topic regarding penal code in order to removal of thorns and anti-social elements.
5. Book Five deals with various secret measures.
6. The seven constituent elements of the State are described in Book Six followed by the twelve constituents of the circle of states.
7. Proper utilization of the six political expedients in the field of diplomacy is discussed in Book Seven.
8. A discussion on the several kinds of dangers or calamities befalling a king and his kingdom both from within and outside is the main subject of Book Eight.
9. Book Nine deals with leading an expedition.
10. Book Ten is focused on various aspects of war.
11. Book Eleven is concerned with various guilds and corporations.
12. Book Twelve describes various contrivances to use in warfare.
13. Book Thirteen is focused on various strategies of warfare.
14. In Book Fourteen, various activities and techniques for the destruction and harm of the enemy are discussed.
15. Book Fifteen presents explanation of thirty-two technical terms used in *Arthashastra*.

It is observed that "there are nearly 180 topics that Chanakya has written in this book" (Pillai, 2017, p. 7). It is to note that "*Arthashastra* is also considered as the science of politics, economics, warfare, and a text that relates to governance, leadership

and strategy. It is also a book on law, foreign policy, international relations and how to rule a territory" (ibid.). Pillai (2017, p. 144) presents the outline of Arthashastra as following:

> The fifteen books can be classified thus: book one is on the fundamentals of management; book two deals with economics; books three, four and five are on law; books six, seven and eight describe foreign policies, books nine to fourteen concern subjects of war; and the fifteenth book deals with the methodology and devices used in writing the Arthashastra. ...
>
> Also, various specialized sciences are described in the Arthashastra, including gemmology, Ayurveda and architecture.

According to Mitra (1991, p. 338), Kautilya's presentation of the topics of *Arthashastra* seems in congruence with "the twofold aspect of the ancient concept of the functions of the State, namely, (i) the protection and welfare of the people and (ii) the security and consolidation of the realm." Traditionally, the first function is termed tantra and the second is known as avapa. Notably, the term tantra has a number of meanings in Sanskrit, and here it should not be confused with the Tantrik texts and practices. Rather, it refers to a system pertaining to the protection and welfare of the people in the State.

According to this scheme, the first five books of Arthashastra, consisting of 95 prakaranas, are devoted to this tantra aspect, whereas the rest ten books, consisting of 84 prakaranas, largely deal with avapa aspect (Mitra, 1991, pp. 338-339). The concluding book serves as "a glossary of thirty-two technical political terms and verbal contractions used in the text" (p. 339). Slightly different observation has been made by Ghoshal & Basak (1993, p. 452), in this regard as following: It "consists of two great divisions, the tantra portion comprising the first five Books (adhikaranas), which

are divided into ninety-four sub-sections (prakaranas), and the avapa portion consisting of the next nine Books, which are divided into eighty-four sub-sections. The fifteenth Book consisting of a single prakarana may be regarded as somewhat outside the two divisions of tantra and avapa."

In brief, this magnum opus by Vishnugupta (aka Kautilya) has been a much appraised treatise on Dandaniti since more than two millennia. Thought it is not the only source of political thought in Hindu society and beyond it has been one of the most influential sources in this regard. Through this treatise, Artha was brought forward to such an extent that there could be a claim of equal or even more importance to it as compared to Dharma. However, as will be discussed hereafter, Arthashastra's ultimate objective is to uphold the Dharma.

## Artha as a means of Dharma

To the ancient Hindu thinker,

> polity and political economy, as sciences, were not independent disciplines. Society was viewed as an organic whole which was governed by the immutable law of dharma (or its Vedic antecedent rita). The term dharma was fairly wide in its connotation. It included codes of socio-economic relationships, and also the relation between the State and the individual, the king and his subjects. (Mitra, 1991, p. 335)

The all-encompassing notion of Dharma has a contextual meaning here. "For the purpose of political theory," as Sircar (1993, p. 515) mentions, "the import of dhrama as law, justice, and duty" is relevant. "In matsya-nyaya there is no law, no justice, no duty. The State is the originator of law, justice, and duty" (ibid.). And, "it is the fear of danda that brings about an order among men, each man minding his own duty (svadharma)" (p. 518). The State is not only

the caretaker of Artha, but it is also "a dharma-promoting samuha (public association)" (p. 519) too.

According to Gajendragadkar (1993, p. 428), the "Dharmasthaniyam" book of Arthashastra

> can legitimately claim to be one of the earliest secular codes of law in the world, and the high level at which legal and juridical principles are discussed, the precision with which statements are made, and the absolutely secular atmosphere which it breathes throughout, give it a place of pride in the history of legal literature.

According to economic historian B.C. Sen, (quoted in Mitra, 1991, p. 339), Arthashastra presents "the art and technique of government with its economic basis treated as an integral part of statecraft and social relations. The manner of its specialization in political economy gives it a stamp of individuality, of belonging to a distinct branch of thought and learning." Though Kautilya's views "are based on practical considerations according to the needs of circumstances" (Mitra, 1991, p. 341) he upholds the supremacy of Dharma. While doing so, he considers the due importance of Artha.

Mitra (1991) pertinently observes that "the sheet-anchor of life was dharma which embraced all aspects of life and society and included what we now refer to as politics and economics" (p. 335). With such background, it is obvious that Dandaniti also was to abide by the law of Dharma. Since Dandaniti owes both to Dharma and Artha in a continuum, good governance is a cumulative outcome of both Dharma and Artha.

To Kautilya, "Artha (wealth and its acquisition and distribution, or the financial viability of the State) is of the utmost importance in so far as it enables a king to discharge his duties to the people and achieve the political objectives of the consolidation and expansion of the territory of the State." (Mitra, 1991, p. 339).

As such, Artha is a means for a greater goal. It provides strong foundation for the ruler and the subjects to perform their duties. To perform one's duty is the Dharma. Good governance in such context is a fine balance between Artha and Dharma.

The notion of raja-dharma is crucial to the ruler. Kautilya's vision of raja-dharma prepares the basis for the ruler's treatment of his subjects. Arthashastra "states that a king who is severe in repression becomes a terror to his people, and one who is mild in the award of punishment is treated by them with contempt, while he who awards punishment as deserved is respected" (Ghoshal & Basak, 1993, p. 452). The rule further goes like this: the rule of carrot and stick or "danda should be awarded after full and just consideration, and it must not be awarded wrongly, nor allowed to remain in abeyance; for, in this case, it will produce the condition of matsya-nyaya or anarchy" (Ghoshal & Basak, 1993, p. 452).

Another aspect of Dharma is related to one's preparedness for doing his or her duty. The preparedness of the ruler is of utmost importance, according to Arthashastra. In Book One, Chapter six, there are twelve sutras elaborating the importance of control over the senses: how to give up kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), mana (pride), mada (arrogance) and harsha (foolhardiness). The purpose is to prepare ruler as the sage king.

> The king wields control by weeding out the six enemies of the senses; he cultivates his intellect by association with elders; keeps a watchful eyes by means of spies; brings about security and well-being by (energetic) activity; maintains the observance of special duties by the subjects by carrying out his own duties; acquires discipline by receiving instruction in the sciences; attains popularity by knowing what is of material advantage; and maintains proper behaviour by doing what is beneficial. (Pillai, 2017, p. 146)

*Arthashastra* puts much emphasis on the preparedness of the king (or any ruler) as "proper discipline and education of the king under experts and specialists depends his power of awarding danda" (Ghoshal & Basak, 1993, p. 452). This emphasis is pertinent. As Pillai (2017, p, 196) observes, "any form of governance depends on the king/leader who is the head of the kingdom or the state. So clearly, Kautilya indicated that creating a good leader, who in turn has an able team of able ministers running the government machinery, provides good governance for its people." In other words, "A rajarishi, along with the dharmic praja following their respective duties, creates an ideal spiritual society - the ultimate aim of any model of 'good governance'" (p. 198).

In Hindu society, "the king's main duty was just to uphold the existing social order, which considered of an infinite number of autonomous groups each with its own constitution, laws, and practices formed for various purposes like local administration, industry, trade, or religion" (Sastri, 1993, p. 487). As it has been observed, Kautilya's Arthashastra "means something quite definite by the state, namely an order of society which the state does not create, but which it exists to secure" (Keith, 1993, p. 455).

The most basic foundation of Artha, the dominion or the earth broadly, is not the creation of the ruler. Likewise, the eternal rules, aspects of Dharma, also are not created by the ruler. What the ideal ruler is expected to do is to ensure good governance by proper acquisition and management of Artha and by upholding the principles of Dharma. This is why the ruler's role in social affairs was rarely expected in traditional Hindu society:

> It is only in the rare instances of disputes arising among them proving incapable of adjustment that the king's aid was invoked; it was only then, and even then only to the extent needed to procure a just settlement of the matter in dispute, that the king did interfere in the affairs of these groups. (Sastri, 1993, p. 487)

As such, Hinduism envisions close interconnection between politics and religion. It is evident from the Hindu perspective that the fine balance between politics and religion ensures peace.

Against this background, it can be fairly said that politics and governance in Hindu milieu abides by Dharma, while keeping Artha in a continuum with that. And, the politics guided by the law of Dharma is instrumental in ensuring peace in the society. As Ghoshal & Basak (1993, p. 452) observe, "The whole of Kautilya's theory of polity is based on the proper and peaceful performance of the assigned duties of the four varnas" (namely, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) and the four stages of human life (called Ashramas) according to orthodox Hinduism. Kautilya's Arthashastra, Keith (1993, p. 453) observes, "accepts wholesale the Brahmanical theory of the castes and their duties, - economics, agriculture, pastoral pursuits, trade and industry, and polity, Dandaniti."

However, the Dharma of the Varnas and Ashramas (that is, the Varnashrama Dharma) discussed here is not in the narrower sense that the opponents of Hinduism subscribe. Here, it is just another terminology for Svadharma, that is, one's own duty. And, the State, and the king as the chief of the State, have the duty to ensure that all the people abide by their own duties - the Svadharma. "To say that the State has been born, and yet the various orders or classes of the people do not follow dharma would indeed be a contradiction in terms, a logical absurdity" (Sircar, 1993, p. 520). As such, it is pertinent to conclude that any political thought in congruence with Hinduism abides by the law of Dharma, and so does the Arthashastra.

## Dharma as an All-embracing Principle

Dharma, as the foremost element in Purushartha-chatushtaya, is an all-embracing principle in Hinduism (Adhikary, 2012). It is "the doctrine of dharma in its entirety (that) imparts to the State the character of an institution" (Sircar, 1993, p. 519) capable of

implementing the Dandaniti. As "the sheet-anchor of life was dharma which embraced all aspects of life and society and included what we now refer to as politics and economics" (Mitra, 1991, p.335), it is unlikely to assume that Arthashastra was not in congruence with such established principle.

Drawing on Mahabharata, it can be said that the ruler, to be in accordance with Hinduism, is always considered to be under the law of Dharma: "One becomes a king for advancing the cause of dharma and not for acting capriciously. All creatures depend on dharma, and dharma depends on the king. He, therefore, is the true king who maintains dharma" (Aiyar, 1993, p. 503). Kautilya's vision of the raja-dharma certainly is in congruence with this standard view of Hinduism. Moreover, to be a good ruler is to understand and abide by the raja-dharma. Thus, it can be concluded that, in line with the orthodox Hindu view, to be an ideal king or any leader is to understand and abide by raja-dharma as envisioned by Arthashastra too.

Of Dharma, Artha and Kama, Kautilya's primary concern while writing Arthashastra must have been Artha. Otherwise, the treatise would not have been "Arthashastra". Kautilya was writing Arthashastra, and hence looking at all the subject matters from the perspective of Artha was natural. Nonetheless, his Artha is not detached with Dharma. For instance, in the opening chapter of the first book, he clearly says, of various disciplines of knowledge those which consist of knowledge on Dharma and Artha are important. The simultaneous mentioning of dharma and artha are worth noticeable.

Kautilya considers Artha a must for Dharma and Kama, and believes that the proper material foundation (Artha) facilitates one to have Dharma and Kama pertinently and finally to attain the Moksha. Establishing and maintaining the triad of virtue, wealth and pleasure (more precisely, Dharma, Artha and Kama) is emphasized by Kautilya himself in the concluding verses of Arthashastra. As such, the proper understanding and implementation of Dandaniti as

the science of politics is to embrace both Dharma (e.g., raja-dharma), the duty, and Artha, in order to ensure material, mental and spiritual well-being of the people.

For the author of the Arthashastra, the interconnection between peace, politics and religion as understood today is primarily through the Dandaniti, which envisions governance in accordance with Dharma. Thus, the role of Dharma in good governance is instrumental. And, the primacy of Artha as emphasized by Kautilya finally serves the purpose of ensuring good governance and peace in the society.

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# Clientelism and its Influence in
# the Nepali Press

Sudarshan Prasad Dahal

This review explores the clientelist structure in politics and its influence in Nepali media with two aims: first, to identify how the clientelist structure has been practiced and influenced media in Nepal; second, to identify how the media perform the functions of clientelist networks. This review uses desk research of post 1990 documents focusing on the practices of clientelist structure in personalized behavior of the leaders, volatile political culture, fragmented civic society, and mounting corruption index in Nepal. Clientelism was a widely practiced phenomenon and it weakened the ideological base of the political parties and became the causes of uncertainty in Nepali politics. The unstable politics decreased public trust and reputation of the politicians, and visibility became a major concern to the leaders while reaching out to the electorate. In this context, the media became a vital tool to communicate with the public for political goals. The power holders practice clientelism, appointing loyalties in the board of directors in the state-owned media, attempt to endorse press restricted bills, and distribute welfare advertisements and subsidies to the favorable media. The media owners practice clientelism, recruiting professionals with strong political ties, frequently changing editors and journalists to ensure balanced representation of different political connections. The journalists tend to establish political connections and cover news with limited ethical guidelines with reference to their allies

and advocate the political strategies of their patronage. Besides political intervention, the shrinking economy in the limited media market, long history of political parallelism of the press and the strong presence of the role of the state might be the explanation for adopting clientelist networks in the media.

**Keywords:** clientelism, corruption, desk research, media performance, Nepali press

## Introduction

This review explores the clientelist structure in politics and its influence in the media performance of Nepal. Media systems of Nepal are characterized as a shrinking media economy in a limited market, partisan history of the press, and unchanged apathetic role of the state. The country has witnessed the multiparty system in 1990 and the political systems developed with the clientelist features like personalization, fragmentation and volatile political culture. There seemed to be a high level of personalized political parties and the government; fragmented civic society; a high level of volatility in electoral, party and the government and mounting corruption indexes in the country.

Concurrently, increasing clientelist structure loosed rational-legal authority in party and state mechanism, weakened party ideology and loosed public trust and reputation in one hand and such tendency developed unstable government and fueled unhealthy competition in the political parties and the leaders in Nepal. In other words, visibility became a crucial factor to win electoral votes in fragile and competitive politics. In such a context, the role of the media became vital to disseminate political information in order to reach out the electorate for political goals. It is obvious that they can use media as a communication channel for dissemination of their own message intending to enhance their positive images and at the same time there is also a possibility that the leaders may reveal their

opponent's transgression intending to downsize their public image so that they can get electoral support in the elections. In this context, there remains an unanswered question that responds to the way the political environment, particularly the clientelist structure emerged and expanded its network in the media performance in Nepal. The aim of this review is to know how the media, particularly the press, interacts with the politics and practice journalism in the changing democracy of Nepal.

Clientelism is a term that is heavily used in political science, which is commonly understood as a relationship between the politicians and the voters. Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 73) illustrate Max Weber's concept of 'rational-legal authority', which is opposite to clientelism and explain the notion of political clientelism as 'an absence form of rule based on adherence to formal and universalistic rules of procedure'. In this sense, clientelism is a contrast form of rational-legal authority that 'seeks to establish bureaucracy which conceive and act as an administrative apparatus being autonomous from particular parties, individuals, and social groups for serving society' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 73). However, the purpose of rational-legal authority is to establish a civic-service system that governs the process of hiring and promoting administrative personnel; the purpose of clientelism is to expand network appointing clients in different private and public positions expecting to fulfil vested interest exchanging votes, money, and power.

Considering these phenomena, the present study was designed to identify how the changing media and political systems intertwined and administered clientelism in their practices in the context of Nepal.

**Research method**

The literatures that relate to clientelism particularly the patron-client structure available on the fields of media and politics of Nepal

were reviewed. The desk research was used to collect data from various sources like reports, policy documents, legal documents, books, book chapters, journal articles, and government decisions that were published in online or offline platforms. Desk research is often called secondary research that refers to research approaches that use data that already exists in some form. Richard Schaefer (2017) suggests that the desk approach involves analyzing mass media outputs mainly newspapers and magazines using library resources or the internet. This method aims to re-analyzing material in the collected data for other purposes, re-examining interview transcripts or anything else that does not involve primary research (Hinds et al., 1997). Richard Schaefer (2017) describes the benefit of desk research as it allows researchers using 'a variety of research techniques that make use of publicly accessible information and data'. Another reason for choosing the desk research for this study is that it offers many qualitative data narratives that discuss issues related to the primary research questions, which have never been analyzed. Similarly, it seeks to critically assess the theory, methods, and findings from existing qualitative research in an attempt to generate and synthesize meanings from multiple studies. The research methods follow four steps from identifying the research questions for secondary analysis, assessing the data, sorting the primary data, and outcome of the sorting data (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010).

Researchers choose desk research in order to apply a new perspective or a news conceptual focus to the original research issues (Heaton, 1998). Another purpose of using this analysis is to describe the contemporary and historical attributes and behavior of individuals, societies, groups or organizations (Corti & Thompson, 1995). Regarding ethical consideration, unlike primary research which is conducted with the consent, the secondary analysis is a re-use of data for purposes that indicated in the primary research (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010). Thus, the present study was conducted without receiving any consent.

The secondary data related to clientelism were reviewed and its consequences on the media systems were explored. The impact of clientelism structure on the role of news media was assumed as an interventionist rather than the detached performer. The functions of the media are also evaluated as more likely to the political interest rather than the interest of the people. The main purpose of this historical exploration was to acquaint the media landscape particularly responding to the queries of how the Nepali the press practiced journalism in a highly clientelist context after 1990 of Nepal.

**Clientelism and media**

Weingrod (1968, p. 379) provides an operational definition of clientelism, stating that as 'largely the study of how political party leaders seek to turn public institutions and public resources to their own ends, and how favors of various kinds are exchanged for votes'. Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) describe the concept as 'a pattern of social organization in which access to social resources is controlled by patrons and delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various forms of support. Hallin and Mancini explain clientelism as 'a particularistic form of social organization, in which formal rules are less important relative to personal connections or connections mediated through political parties and other organizations' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 58).

According to Hicken (2011), the relationship between patron and client of clientelist networks consists of the four important elements: 1) dyadic relationships, 2) contingency, 3) hierarchy, and 4) iteration. In a dyadic relationship, the patron and clients interact either face-to-face or through a chain of brokers or networks in order to exchange votes and resources. In the form of contingent or reciprocal relationships, the delivery of a good or service can be seen on the part of both the patron and client with direct response to

a delivery of a reciprocal benefit by the other party, or the credible promise of such a benefit in the form of goods that can be offered to voters. In the hierarchical patron-client relation, the patron uses his/her own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for the clients who, for his/her part, reciprocates by offering generous support and assistance, including personal service, to the patron. In the iteration stage, both parties involved in the exchange of goods in a formal program anticipating future interactions (Hicken, 2011). Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest that a strong level of political clientelist structure in politics fuels the political culture of personalized decision-making in the government, or party; a high level of volatility in the formation of government, electoral and the party system. The clientelist forces also ignited corruption and also fragmented civic society (also see Mancini, 2018). Before moving to the phenomena of clientelism in Nepali politics, I have briefly introduced the concept of clientelist network in media, so that it can assist to understand the relationship between the concepts in Nepali context that is the second objective of this exploration. Thus, the following section provides the analytical framework separating the concepts from political clientelism to the media clientelism for detailed analysis.

## Clientelist network in media

However, clientelism is explained with vote buying and exchanging practices by establishing networks with social and professional institutions; it is a phenomenon of media studies in which scholars explore how the politicians affect voters via the media (Ornebring, 2013, p. 498). Ornebring provides two fundamental differences of clientelism from political implication to media studies. First, clientelism in media studies is interpreted as the 'unlike buying and exchanging' phenomenon in which the politician can affect the voters via the media. Second, the media

itself can perform clientelist behavior by acting as the *Fourth Estate* exposing clientelist practices and networks (Ornebring, 2013, p. 498). Following this explanation, it can be assumed that the concept of media clientelism can be explained with two dynamic actions: firstly, the media actions can be observed based on the extent that external clientelist forces such as government and non-government organizations including trade unions, civic societies, political parties and business groups that influence the media performance. Secondly, the clientelist performance of the media actions can be explored with the performing roles of the media itself. For example, the clientelist features can be identified in the media performance in the interventionist roles in which the journalists intend to cover the news advocating the patrons who provide resources to them rather than being detached performer while revealing patron's transgression in the news (McQuail, 1992; Hanitzsch, 2007; Mellado, 2015; Marquez-Ramirez et al., 2019).

Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) note that the patrons in clientelist structure intend to establish their network offering some goods or services, appointing their loyalties in the public institutions and promoting them with providing incentives and other benefits including corruption. Mediated clientelism can be explained as the system commitment in which the media focuses on particular interests of the group of people that is stronger and the notion of the 'common good' weaker (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p, 58).

The relationship between media and clientelism associates with the instrumentalizing power of media in favor of patron-clients benefit (Mancini, 2018). In the process of instrumentalization, 'the clientelist structure, as outside influences such as parties, politicians, social groups, or movements, or economic actors intend to control the media performance making visible in the media seeking favor in the world of politics' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 37; Thompson, 2000). In this process, the government as a patron makes appointments in

the posts of executives more on the basis of political loyalty than purely professional criteria aiming to establish a strong patron-client network in the media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Similarly, in the private media, the owners hire journalists from political backgrounds in order to establish connections with the political parties and the governments. They often use their media properties as a vehicle for negotiation with other elites and for intervention in the political world; and for these reasons political parallelism in the media tends to be high where the clientelist tradition is strong (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 76).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) explain the phenomena of clientelist networks in the media in different levels and forms. In the strong clientelist connection, Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest a number of indicators that lie on the behavior of the journalists, media owners, and the political leaders or the regulatory authorities. Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 77) explain that the regulatory authorities in the clientelist structure tend to make more appointments on the basis of political loyalty than purely professional criteria. The government seems unsuccessful in enforcing broadcast regulation. The promulgated laws often honored in the breach offer many opportunities and incentives for particularistic pressures. The political leaders can pressure media owners by selectively enforcing broadcasting tax and other laws. At the level of the media or the owners, they intend to hire professionals who have political affiliations so that the owners can obtain government's contracts and concessions for successful operation of the media business. The owners or the prominent journalists may exert pressures of their own by threatening selectively to expose wrongdoing by public officials. The media owners also often use their media properties as a vehicle for negotiation with other elites and for intervention in the political world. In journalists' level, they tend to be integrated into clientelist networks, and their ties to parties, owners, or other

patrons weaken professional solidarity and also are not obliged to follow journalistic codes of ethics. They also give less importance to the public hearings and documents to the political process and closed negotiations among elites.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) provide an analytical framework in which each parameter can be measured with two weak and strong unidirectional dimensions. The presence of these above-described phenomena can be explained with the strong feature of clientelism in the media systems in which the press is encouraged to perform instrumental use of media being interventionist rather than the detached performer.

Furthermore, Hallin and Mancini describe the clientelist structure, though a particularistic phenomenon, that rarely practice in advanced democracy, but a pervasive feature of non-Western media and political systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2012; Mancini, 2018). Some scholars reveal the clientelist phenomenon in their comparative as well as country specific case studies. McCargo (2012), for example, compared media performance in non-Western context such as Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and found the media of these East Asian countries were practicing watchdog journalism often 'captured by private, elite interests' rather than the public interest. In another case, Chakravartty & Roy (2015) analyzed Indian media and found that the media of India supported the interest of the media organizations rather than the interest of the people. These Indian media were shaping news with the value of political-economic dynamics such as populism that embedded the 'Modi phenomenon'. Researchers also identified the phenomenon of clientelism with other concepts of media systems such as journalistic professionalism, political parallelism and the role of the state. The presence of the strong clientelism exist in the media systems in which the journalism seems less likely professional autonomy, more likely performing politically parallel role in the society, and more

likely practicing state intervention (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2012; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011; Mancini, 2018), practices more likely the role of interventionist watchdog (Marquez-Ramirez et al., 2019; Mellado, 2015; Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011), and also perform more likely episodic framing (Iyengar, 1991).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest that such tendencies of clientelism can be found in both private and public media where the media exist with a low level of newspaper circulation and a high level of shrinking economy. Mancini (2018) identified that media clientelism was prevalent in the East European countries where democracy was in transition. The political culture of these countries seemed to have a high level of government turnover, a high level of volatility in the electoral and the political parties along with a high level of conflict in the civic society. The political leaders were struggling to win public trust amidst massive corruption in the competitive politics.

The following section provides a brief description about how the politicians practiced clientelism and influenced media performance in Nepal. The first part of this section gives some basic foundation of the media landscape of Nepal and the second part highlights some key features of emerging clientelism structure in politics and its influence in Nepali press.

**Media landscape of Nepal**
*Media market and readership*

Liberal political systems after 1990 provided ample ground for a number of private investors establishing media houses and breaking the monopoly of the state-owned media market in Nepal.

Despite the growth of media in local, regional, and national levels, there is a limited circulation of newspapers and also a minor presence of readership (UNESCO, 2013). There is a domination of

Kathmandu-centric elite readers in the Nepali press (Onta, 2006). Despite the growth of media outlets; the media organizations of Nepal have been facing economic challenges losing advertising revenue. The Advertising Agency of Nepal (AAN) has mentioned in its annual report of 2020 that the advertisement of newspapers has dropped by 40% within a few years shifting to online portals, particularly in multimedia applications (Rijal, 2020). The shrinking economy of the press started a bit earlier when the country was heated by the Great Earthquake 2015 followed by trans-border blockade with India in 2015 and occurrence of COVID19 in 2020. In these crises, the media have lost billions of dollars. The Government of Nepal-National Planning Commission (2015) estimated the total loss of the damage by the Great Earthquake in the communications sector was NPR 3.6 billion (US$ 36.10 million). Aryal (2022) pointed out that many newspapers shut down for a week, and several media organizations also closed down forever and hundreds of journalists forcefully quitted their jobs in the period of economic downfall of the media business.

*Political connections of the press*

Press and politics have a long-term rampant relationship in which both institutions were fighting for establishing democracy. The press supported the political parties, making aware the citizens about the politics and mobilizing them updating political news and also taking part as a campaigner in every political movement led by the political parties of Nepal. On the contrary, the purpose of the establishment of the press in the autocratic *Rana* regime (1846-1951 AD) was to lionize the rulers and their family (Devkota, 2016). The press was completely prohibited from writing against the government (Malla, 1983). This was the time, Dev Samser, the then *Rana* Prime minister, had promulgated a *sanad*, a written authority that directed the press with strict guidelines, of 'what should and should not be published' (Devkota, 2016). When the political system changed from

*Rana* autocracy to democracy in 1951, several private newspapers emerged. Banskota and Bhattarai (2022) note that the newspapers of the first decade of democracy were limited in number but that was the pioneering attempts of some enthusiasts who started private-owned daily newspapers in Nepal. Siddhi Charan Shrestha, renowned poet in Nepali literature, started first private daily newspaper '*Aawaj' in* the19th February, 1951 (Banskota & Bhattarai, 2022). The role of the press in democracy after the immediate downfall of the *Rana* regime was to provide news to the mass illiterate people through the selected elites in the country.

Mission oriented journalism was prevalent in the absolute monarchy period between 1960 and 1989 (Dahal, 2015). Major political parties had their own newspapers such as *Nepal Pukar, Nawa-Nepal* (Nepali Congress); *Nepal-Sandesh* (*Rastriya Praja Party*); *Nawa Yug* (Nepal Communist Party) (see Devkota, 2016, pp. 94-96). Aditya (1996) remarks that the journalists in the party-less political systems were divided either by affiliating in the party, or, the rulers.

Since 1952, the journalists of Nepal have been affiliated with several professional organizations including the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) (Devkota, 2016, 138); but these journalists' unions were divided based on their affiliated political parties (UNESCO, 2013). For instance, the four major journalists' unions and associations are affiliated with political parties like 'the *Press Chautari* is understood to be an association of Journalists close to the Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist; Nepal Press Union close to Nepali Congress; and, the Revolutionary Journalists' Association close to Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist' (UNESCO, 2013, p. 76).

Nepali journalists conceived their role orientation as a watchdog performer, but their historic root was 'development journalism' in which the journalists perceive their role is to advocate

governments' development related decisions (Ramprasad & Kelly, 2003). Regmi (2022) observed Nepali journalism performance and found that the investigative reporting was scattered in different genres including literary books, newspapers, and magazines.

*Role of the state*

The state has been performing dominant roles in the development of the press in Nepal. The democratic government for the first time guaranteed the press freedom constitutionally in 1990. It was a milestone to Nepali press; the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 had protected freedom of expression, and editorial independence with the norms of 'no prior censorship' (Kharel, 2010). The state also endorsed a number of laws, regulations and policies including Press and Publication Act 1991; Press and Public Rules 1992, National Communication Policy 1992; and Long-Term Policy of Information and Communication Sector, 2003 in subsequent years (Media-Foundation Nepal, 2012). Recently, the Constitution of Nepal 2015 incorporated a number of rights including Rights to Information and Rights to Expression as the fundamental rights of the citizens.

There is a strong presence of state-owned public media systems in Nepal. These media include the Radio Nepal, the Nepal Television, a century long newspaper, the *Gorkhapatra,* and a national news agency, the *Rastriya Samachar Samitee* (RSS). These media are supplying authentic information of the government and also regulating the private media provoking the quality of the press (Kharel, 2010). In sum, the state-media are promoting the norms of social responsibility of the press and also providing information to the Nepali press (Aditya, 1996). It can be observed that many senior journalists working in the state-owned media where it is their professional responsibility to advocate the government, are now shifting toward the private media and holding senior positions across the country.

Assessing the journalism situation of Nepal, Freedom House (2015), an international monitoring organization, has assessed the Nepali press as a 'partly free' category. But in the past, the journalism situation of Nepal was in the 'not free' category. Many media persons were intimidated, kidnapped and also killed during a decade long Maoist Insurgency (1996-2006), and Royal Coo in 2005 (Freedom House Report, 2008) and also in the republic democracy of Nepal (Adhikary & Pant, 2016). Freedom House had marked Nepal as one of the top ten unsafe places for journalists in the world in 2008.

*Professionalism practices*

The journalists of Nepal seem occupied with new technology and deregulating platforms having higher education in journalism (Acharya & Sharma, 2022). The universities of Nepal are providing a number of journalism and mass communication related courses (Adhikary & Pant, 2014). A great number of educated youths are entering the journalism profession (Media-Asia Foundation, 2012; Acharya & Sharma, 2022). The media houses, though insufficient, are providing in-house training, encouraging scholarships and learning opportunities abroad (Media Foundation-Nepal, 2012; Humagain et al. 2010).

For the first time in Nepal, the Nepal Press Commission was established in 1957 and today's Press Council Nepal (PCN) has formed with the promulgation of the Press Council Act 1992 (Khadka, 2020). The purpose of the CPN is to promote the standards of a free press and to advise the government on matters relating to the development of healthy credible journalism in the country (Khadka, 2020). Khadka (2020) states that the Press Council, as an authorized sole government body, regulates the media outlets and deals with public concern to the media. The Council categorizes media houses and also provides welfare advertisements and subsidies to the needy organization.

The professional organizations like the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) have initiated and launched some ethical

guidelines, including Journalists' Code of Conduct 2016, Working Journalists Act 2007; Online Media Operation Directive 2016 in order to enhance professionalism of journalism and minimize external socio-political intervention in the news.

## Unstable clientelist structure and use of media

The political history of Nepal can be marked with the continuation of a long tradition of clientelism. Pandey (2018) connotes the term of clientelism with corruption and states that the patron-client structure is a historic phenomenon of modern Nepal. He describes the clientelist tradition with the foundation of modern Nepal that was initiated in the mid-eighteenth century. The great King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who unified the modern kingdom of Nepal, had distributed land as *Jagir* (a system assigning land for the government employees) to the '*bhai-bhardar,* the near and the dear ones in the cabinet or in the palace. Though, the purpose of the formation of the clientelist structure was neither seeking votes nor increasing corruption; but it was for seeking favor in the unification of the Kingdom of Nepal. Unlike its initial days, Pandey (2018) correlates the concept of clientelism with the mounting corruption cases in Nepal. He uses the term like 'patrimonial structure' instead of clientelism and explains the situation as lack of 'integrity' in the government. He also describes the patrimonial structure that expanded their networks for centuries in all kinds of rulers such as autocratic, authoritarian and even the followers of democracy of Nepal.

The autocratic *Rana* rulers distributed lands and resources to the near and dear ones in the name of *'birtas,* and '*jagirdaris'* (Pandey, 2018). The purpose of this type of clientelist practices was to collect revenue from rent-and-revenue farming feudal agents to regular administrative officials in order to protect their own family and throne. In the party-less *Panchayat Period* (1960-1989), the

authoritarian rulers competed for power and patronage and engaged in keeping clients and surrogates happy at the expense of the public (Pandey, 2018). The power holders are intending to make informal contracts between patrons and clients on lucrative appointments in high public offices in multiparty democracy of Nepal (Pandey, 2012; Mahat, 2005).

After 1990, when the country shifted from authoritarian party-less *Panchayat Systems* to multi party system, Khanal (2004, p. 56) marked the period as 'the political appointments in the public sector, particularly those having financial dealing, were made on the basis of monetary offerings to the ministers and the party fund'. The leaders involved in illicit financial give and take among coalitions to form or bring down governments (Mahat, 2005). Dix (2011), though illustrating the phenomenon of patron-client network with increasing corruption context, opined that the politically aligned individual power holders succeeded to expand their network in various socio-political strata disseminating party's slogans through media and the developmental projects.

It can be noted that when the peoples' movement down-sized the king's power from absolute monarchy to ceremonial kingship in 1990; the political leaders who had fought for democracy also had no idea how to form a good governance (Pandey, 2018). It was expected that the political transformation had to establish a strong rational-legal authority in all state-mechanisms such as in the government, party, and civic society; they were unable to adequately form the required rules and regulations in time. As a result, the elected governments failed several times to perform long-term consensus on political culture. Baral (2004) pointed out that the political leaders in this fragile state, could not demonstrate a strong foundation of legal provision that can bound each party member and transform their consolidated democratic ideas into action. The leaders also lost the opportunity to change the whole bureaucratic system (Pandey,

2018). The elite bureaucrats who were in the government's key position from the beginning were the 'power-hungry traditional elites'. In such a transitional situation, these bureaucrats, as a stable government, fulfilled the void of poor governance in the new democratic set up. Pandey (2018) noted that these elite forces were involved in the formation of state-mechanism and continued their legacy of provoking politicians expanding informal networks appointing the loyalties in the government's organizations rather than following any formal procedures. He concluded that these power-hungers captured the state mechanism and gave continuity to their past legacy of clientelist structure capturing human and capital resources in the country.

In a nutshell, the consequences of the clientelist structure weakened party ideology and strengthened individual leader's power and gave birth to unstable political culture. The political culture can be characterized as a strong hold of personalized leadership; a high level of volatile circumstances in the formation of the government, electoral choices and the emerging political parties, and also highly fragmented civic society. These changes not only geared up corruption indexes in the government, the political parties and the leaders also dissociated with the voters. Since a couple of years, the political institutions have been losing explicit public trust. For example, very recently Kathmandu University has conducted a survey of the Nepali people along with Interdisciplinary Analysts and The Asia Foundation in 2022. As usual, this time also marked a high level of political distrust among the people. Only 44 percent respondents show their trust toward political parties whereas 91.2 percent show their acquaintance toward Nepal Army, out of 7,060 respondents across Nepal in 2022. In other words, the role of the media has been becoming vital to connect leaders with the dissatisfied electorate, making visible political leaders in the media disseminating political information without any hindrances.-

*Domination of personalized politics*

Leaders' personalized approach was the cause of weakening the role of the state and the political party in the multiparty democracy of Nepal. The institution of the government of Nepal, for instance, the cabinet, parliament and the public institution where the role of individuals seemed dominant, weakened the role of the state and political party (Baral, 2004a). Hachhethu (2004, p. 83) notes that the Parliamentary Parties (PP) of Nepal lack to practice 'intensive discussion' on 'party's policy', 'government program', and 'bills' because of less developing mechanisms for effective deliberative function and authoritarian approaches of the leaderships.

Hachhethu (2004) argues that the Prime Ministers of Nepal have been performing the patronage role by controlling and commanding the sources in the Parliament, controlling distribution of patronage, and practicing authority in party organization. He further claims that the PM can use the power of patronage distribution keeping in mind the survival of government as top-most priority while selecting the members of Council of Ministers from among several MPs of the ruling party. As the Leader of Parliament, the PM can play a decisive role in the posting of MPs in privileged positions and /or executive posts of Houses, including Speaker, Chairman of National Assembly, and Chairman of Parliamentary Committees (Hachhethu, 2004; Baral, 2004a).

Furthermore, there are a number of cases that show how the PMs exercise personalized approaches in the government and at the party level. For example, when G. P. Koirala formed a cabinet in 1998, he included dissidents in the cabinet considering the internal balance of power of his own party, the Nepali Congress (NC), taking own decisions in the selection of the ministers (Hachhethu, 2004, p. 86). Similarly, the NC leader and the Prime Minister S. B. Deuba had formed a jumbo-sized cabinet with a number of ministers extending to 49 out of 205 members which is the highest number

ever recorded, without party consent in the Parliament during his coalition government in 2001 (Hachhethu, 2004, p. 86). The PM of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) led government placed members of the minority factions by own decision in the government. The *Rastriya Prajatantra Party* (RPP) leaders resorted to a strategy of inclusion of its 17 out of 19 MPs in Parliament who were in the cabinet of three successive coalition governments from 1995 to 1998 led by the leaders of NC and RPP itself (Baral, 2004a). Although the patronage practices in Nepali politics did not support the general logic of giving long term jobs among groupings and also increasing tenure of the government, the PM highly practiced the patronage role of setting criteria of inclusion and exclusion in the government and the party system (Hachhethu, 2004).

The PMs exercise their power of punishment that retains control over the Parliamentary Parties. In Nepal, the PM not only possesses the sole authority to sack ministers from the cabinet as the party leader in the Parliament but also can command through the Party Whip and control the MPs to act for implementing the party's policy and the Leader's decision in the House (Hachhethu, 2004). Giving some examples, Hachhethu (2004, p. 87) notes that 'G. P. Koirala had sacked six cabinet ministers from his government, charging them for showing greater loyalty to party leaders Ganesh Man Singh and K. P. Bhattarai, rather than the Prime Minister in 1991'. Although the UML had led a minority government for nine months in 1995, sacked C. P. Mainali from the cabinet charging him for the violation of party discipline (Hachhethu, 2004). Baral (2004) remarks that the situation occurs because of the lack of defined rules and responsibility in party-government relationships.

*Volatile politics*

Leaders' highly ambitious personal moves lost confidence and trust in the coalition governments and pushed politics into a high level of unstable political culture that developed as a high level

of government turnover, a high level of electoral volatility, and a number of new political parties in the political arena of Nepal.

Hachhethu (2004, p. 97) recalls the representative democracy of Nepal as the street confrontation and coalition making and unmaking that gave birth to instability. Despite consensus practices in Nepali politics, Hachhethu notes that the de-ideologization was a common characteristic of all political parties and the place of CPN-UML was ahead in this process because of its fluctuation in inter-party relations while making and unmaking governments. The CPN-UML was fit for alliance building under the other parties' leadership, for instance, with the extreme rightist, the RPP in 1997, with the centrist, the NC in 2004, as well as with the extreme leftist Maoists in 2008. This party also formed its own coalition government along with the partnership of other parties such as with the UCPN (Maoists) in 2011 and 2015 and also with the NC in 2009 (Hachhethu, 2021, p. 294).

There were 29 governments that appeared in the 30 years, between 1990 and 2021 in the period (Office of the Prime Minister of Nepal, n.d.). Because of the mounting intra and inter level competition of the leadership, any single government succeeded to remain in an average one year four days in the government. This kind of fluctuation in the formation of government can be considered as one of the highest turnover records, 96.7% in Nepal (As per Pedersen Index).

Party leaders' decreasing trust was associated with the fluctuating behavior of the electorate. The political parties confessed high levels of electoral volatility where almost 19 percent popular voters moved from one party to another and from one candidate to another between 2008 and 2017 national level elections (Election Commission of Nepal, 2017, 2021). Voters' such tendency, determine the position of political parties and the leaders whether they remain in the office or in the opposition. The Maoists, for example, had a landslide electoral victory winning 50% seats out of 240 in the first

CA election in 2008. The scenario changed dramatically, when the political parties failed to draft a new constitution through the first Constitution Assembly. This was the period when the Maoists had not only derailed the government but also abandoned its own previously promised commitment of identity-based restructuring of the state (Hachhethu, et al., 2008). The Maoists confessed an unexpected result in the second CA election shifting from the first to the third position in the Parliament, securing only 26 seats out of 240 in 2013. We can see a high level of electoral volatility in these elections, when around 19% of the electoral voters switched their preferences from one election to another election from 2008 to 2017. Hence, the role of media as a tool to communicate political information can be considered as crucial to influence citizens' volatile behavior for electoral victory in the competitive clientelist politics of Nepal.

The third changes that lost confidence in the constituency of the leaders and led to uncertainty in the politics were the causes of appearance and disappearance of new political parties in the political arena. Various sources show that the *Sadbhabana Party Nepal* (SPN) was formed in 1985 by *Gajendra Narayan Singh* in the name of *Nepal Sadbhavana Council*. The main aim of this party was to promote the interests and citizenship of the *Madhesi* community of the *Terai* region. However, the party had participated in the 1990 democratic movement of Nepal; in 2003, the party split into two groups: *Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi)* and *Nepal Sadbhavana Party*. In 2007, two parties merged into NSP (A). The *Nepal Sadbhawana Party* merged with another four parties: *Madhesh Rastra Janantrik Party (Krantikari)*, Social Republican Party, Nepal Republican People's Party and *Jantantrik Terai Madhesh Mukti Tigers*. Similarly, six of the seven *Madhesh*-based parties under the *Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha* (SLMM) also merged and formed a new party – *Rastriya Janata Party* (RJP) in 2017. Hachhethu (2021) states that the increasing number of political

parties increased competition and hence, the leaders who were representing for long in their constituencies might have been feeling uncertainty in the upcoming elections.

*Fragmented civic society*

Political parties' anti-move on their commitments, performing weakening ties with their social institutions and manifesting it with a series of protests and unfulfilled demands created division in the society. There were a number of governments and non-government organizations that associated with political parties and performed civil roles aligning the political parties in Nepal. Parajuli (2004, p. 175) describes the civic society as the long term practiced clientelist social structure. The tradition of civic society associates with the traditional practices such as *guthis*, *dhikurs* and *parmas,* a system in which labor can be exchanged on a physical level among the community people. Today, such traditional practice has transformed into the form of non-government organizations (NGOs), professional organizations and unions that function in various sectors such as health, agriculture, poverty alleviation, and good governance in Nepal. During the Maoists' Insurgency between 1996 to 2006, a number of civic representing groups formed by the Maoists and other political parties such as *Madheshis*, *Tharus* and other indigenous groups like *Limbuwan*, *Khumbuwan* and other had acted for making people aware, achieving mutual goals, making demands on the state, and holding state officials accountable (Karkee & Comfort, 2016). Many scholars claim that the functions of these government and non-government organizations and civic representing groups were to support the party leaders raising the social and political agenda organizing media campaign, performing political activism, and strengthening public opinion in line with their aligned parties and ideologies (Parajuli, 2004; Baral, 2004; Karkee & Comfort, 2016).

The Maoists, for example, not only succeeded to mobilize these organized pluralistic forces, they also succeeded to create

ideological differences among the political cleavages (Hutt, 2004). As a result, the Maoists were able to perform their victory forming parallel judicial institutions capturing several districts of Nepal and paralyzed state mechanisms (Karki & Seddon, 2003).

Later in republican political systems, the minorities' pluralistic forces like *Madheshis*, *Tharus*, *Limbuwan*, *Khumbuwan* uprisings called protest against the state and a number of citizens were threatened and killed in their movements (Hachhethu, 2021). Many householders who were not involved in the representing agitator groups in the region where the protesters had strong presence, migrated to other locations particularly from *Terai* to other parts of Nepal where the victims feel safe to live. Scholars argue that the agenda of 'identity based federal state' of the ethnic communities was synchronized by the Maoists, but with the downfall of this party in the second Constitution Assembly election in 2013, the other mainstream party such as the NC and the CPN-UM had partly accepted Maoist's agenda and hence, ignite the conflict in the nation (Hachhethu, 2021; Hutt, 2004). Hachhethu et al., (2008) note that these clientelist forces were agitators when the Maoists took anti-move from their own previously promised commitment of 'ethnic and regional identity' while restructuring the nation that was applauded during the Insurgency.

Despite these limitations, in several cases when the political parties were committed to perform collective decisions, the functions of the civic societies were considered as a safeguard to democracy of Nepal (Parajuli, 2004). The campaign of these informal groups seemed as an important mechanism to represent citizens' voice and the members of the civic society and in many cases, they consulted to find out the solution to the issues like women's right when the Parliament passed the amendment of the *Muluki Ain* (Muluki Act) in its 21st session (Parajuli, 2004). Along with a year-long uprisings of the *Madheshis,* the social groups like *Tharus, Janajatis*, women and

*Dalits* had also organized movements against the government and gained momentum ensuring a quest for recognition of their distinct cultural identities and building pressure for political power-sharing in the upcoming Constitution of Nepal 2015.

Hachhethu (2021) further explains that the consequences of the movements of these organized groups in the initial days of democracy were to transform pragmatic norms and systems in various levels such as in the Civic Service system, recognition of national language, and their representation in the different levels of governments. In later days, when the political interventions continued, the roles of the informal clientelist groups seemed as 'vociferous' in the media criticizing the government particularly in the royal coup in 2005 to reinstate the sacked government (Hachhethu, 2021).

Similarly, the role of civic society including media can be interconnected as the causes of downfall of monarchy, promulgating different rights-based policies, and many ethnic upsurges when the political parties demonstrated unity. But in many cases these ethnic communities and representative organizations were expanding clientelist networks distorting from the notion of aligned parties. Hachhethu, observed a mounting figure of more than four dozen of *Janajatis* communities dominated by the Left cadres, particularly the Maoists, were fragmented when the party seemed weak and derailed from the government in 2009 (Hachhethu, 2021). In sum, the political parties, because of lack of willingness of the implementations of the political parties' commitments, were weakening their ideological base and their ties with the civic societies.

*Mounting corruption*

Corruption has been becoming a social problem where the power holders, unlike the welfare of the common people, concentrate their actions for personal benefit. However, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Transparency International

(TI), an international non-governmental organization (INGO) which measures the perceived level of public sector corruption worldwide; provides limited data only after 2004 of Nepal. These reports indicate that despite Nepal Governments' anti-corruption commitment, the country has been suffering with a high level of corruption index. The CPI reports ranked Nepal as 121 positions in 2006, 154 in 2011 and 131 positions in the list of 168 countries, in 2016. The Transparency International has not only shown the corruption figure that prevailed in every sector and ranked the democratic country Nepal as the fourth most corrupt country in South Asia followed by Afghanistan (165th) and Bangladesh (146th) and Pakistan (124th) in 2019.

It is interesting to note that the corruption rank showed a very low of 90 in 2004 when the Parliament was vacant and the political system was parallelized by the troika forces known as the Parliamentarian parties, monarchy and the rebellion Maoists. Because of the failure of the state to conduct periodic elections, the political parties at that time were not in the position of continuing the Parliament and then King Gyanendra had nominated some persons from non-political background of the members in the cabinet. The index reached an all-time high of 154 in 2011, when the political parties were forcefully practicing coalition government in order to draft a new constitution, though failed, in the Republic Democracy.

However, the economic condition of Nepal is shifting from 'least developed country' that was classified by the United Nations in the 1970s to 'developing country' in 2021; the country itself is known as one of the highly corrupted states in the world (Transparency International, n.d.). Country's political, economic and social parameters have been showing alarming situations and indicating transitional obligatory figures on the miserable condition of the nation. Pandey (2018) remarks the increasing political corruption is the cause of *integrity deficit disorder* that refers to the tendency of the political leaders who fetish for power and perks in their personal and party-

political behavior. Pandey further explains leaders' such unrelenting tendency to ignore others and create contagious effects on the larger society that result with an absence of empathy – and, moral sense.

Although, Pandey (2018) explains the causes of fertility of economic corruption is because of the unprecedented failure of the leaders to form successive governments that support to achieve progress and perform functional political culture; the forces of status quo that had implanted for centuries in Nepal in the form of a patron-client structure. Pandey (2018) further argues that there are three interrelated social factors that created patron-client networks across social institutions including the media in Nepal. These factors are the foundation of 'historically practiced social composition', 'dubious role of political leadership', and 'patrimonial mind-set in the politics and society' that have been practiced and fueled corruption through clientelist networks in the democratic transition of Nepal.

In sum, the leaders' personalized approach weakened the roles of the state and political party. Political leaders' highly ambitious personal moves not only performing clientelist behavior, lost trust and reputation in the coalition government, electoral support and the inter level party politics. The coalition government was completely failing to perform stability in the country. A high level of electoral volatility and appearance and disappearance of the number of parties in the political arena were reflecting citizens' distrust toward the political institutions and also creating a competitive political environment where the politicians feel unsafe in their constituency. The mounting fragmentation in the civic society was manifesting anti-move of the political commitment and threatening mainstream politics that was creating division in the society. And finally, mounting corruption not only demonstrated a strong foundation of clientelist structure, it was indicating unprecedented failure of the leaders to form good governance. The power of the media can communicate political information, making visible the leaders in the media in order to

make aware the citizens about the political agenda, engaging them to discuss over the disseminated agenda and finally can encourage them to take good actions mobilizing the voters in the political decision-making process such as in the elections. Considering such a situation, there might be a possibility that the incumbent political parties and the leaders holding power in the government and getting victory from the electoral votes might be encouraged to expand clientelist networks in the media. Hence, the patrons might appoint loyalties in the board of directors in the state-owned media including the Press Council Nepal, attempt to endorse the press restricted bills, and distribute welfare advertisements and subsidies to the favorable media expecting to exchange their political power with votes disseminating their own interest news in Nepali press.

## Media practices in clientelist structure in Nepal

It is apparent that the media production is a collective action and for this task the journalists have to encounter a number of influences from their own personal characteristics to the media and political structural level that can influence their performance (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; McQuail, 1992). Hence, the country's political systems, mainly the clientelist structure can be considered as an important influencer of the media performance.

Though any empirical research to date presents a direct clientelist ties of political patronage with the ownership in the privately owned daily newspapers of Nepal. It is obvious that because of the absence of any 'clear laws on media ownership', there is no mechanism to address the issue of media concentration (UNESCO Report, 2013). The practices of political affiliations of the Nepali press can be seen in various levels of interventions such as in the government or authorities, media or ownership, and the individual journalists' levels.

*Government's intervention in the media of Nepal*

The governments of Nepal intend to establish its connections with its clients appointing political loyalties in the public media. Acharya and Sharma (2022, p. 3) observed that the government awards 'their loyalty appointing them in high-level posts in order to manage government media'. Pandey (2022) observes the governments' appointees in the leading position in the public broadcasting, the press and the news agencies. Besides media, the government also appoints in the state mechanism where informal contracts covertly transacted between patrons and clients on lucrative appointments in high public offices (Pandey, 2005). While appointing the loyal cadres in the boards of directors in state-owned media, the government takes arbitrary decisions, appointing non-journalism professional background (Sharma & Acharya, 2022). Unfortunately, these officials' tenure seemed similar to the unstable political culture where the appointed members very often sacked in a short tenure when the government changes.

Acharya and Sharma (2022) state that the government of Nepal not only appoints political loyalties in the board of the Press Council Nepal (PCN), the government also controls the media making policies of welfare advertisements of the private media. Maharjan (2014) found the government allocates a huge amount of budget in its annual plans and the PCN distributes it to the favorable media houses in order to carry welfare advertising across multiple mediums.

Besides welfare advertising, the government also expanded its clients offering many opportunities and incentives in Nepal. Sharma et al. (2022) found that the government directly and indirectly influences 'the so-called autonomy of the PCN by controlling its budget and access to external funding'. KC (2019) remarks that the state provides subsidies in the name of reducing postal and the taxes, VAT, newspapers' printing papers and transportation expenditure

of media houses and the journalists.  The government had also announced a health insurance policy in the COVID19 through which the journalists would be treated with special care without any charges in the public hospitals (Aryal, 2022). Although, the special offer is not only prevalent in media sector, it was also found in the politics while the UML had formed a minority government in the second parliament (1994-99), when the PM as the patron introduced the system of constituency development fund to be spent by the concerned MPs in their respective constituencies (Khanal, 2004, p. 55). Khanal further notes that 'each succeeding government (between 1994-99) increased allowances and other financial incentives to the MPs', for instance 'no income-tax', 'unlimited amount for medical treatment' and 'allowed to import vehicles with duty exemption' also known as '*Pajero scandals'* in Nepal (Khanal, 2004, 55). Hachhethu (2021) writes about the causes of excessive politicization of society, the professional domain in particular is due to the continuation of clientelist structure even the governments that formed after the promulgation of the New Constitution 2015. He describes as 'both the NC and the CPN-UML are overwhelmed by the distribution of selective incentives by top leaders controlling and selecting candidates from non-political backgrounds for the elections (Hachhethu, 2021, p. 295).

UNESCO assesses media development in Nepal and illustrates that 'there are no tax and business regulations aimed at encouraging media development in a non-discriminatory manner' (UNESCO, 2013, p. 41). Furthermore, the provision of government's advertisement and subsidies that pressured media houses and created a division between the state and the stakeholders. Sharma and Acharya (2022) found that the PCN had promoted a division between the state and the stakeholders while implementing the government's decisions of distributing subsidies in the media. They further note that the distributed budget of 2019 has 'only favors the alliance newspapers' (Sharma & Acharya, 2022).

The government's intervention can be observed in receiving special contracts and concessions of the media business. KC (2019) observed that the owners of private media get special contracts and concessions even in the broadcast licenses from the government. Some scholars also observed in many cases that the receiving advertisements and subsidies without any effort were even criticized and rejected in some cases by several media houses who claimed in the favor of independent professionalism (Sharma & Acharya, 2022; KC, 2019).

The government very often seems unsuccessful while attempting to enforce some press related bills. In 2019, a newly elected ideologically leftist party, the Nepal Communist Party (NCP), that was unified between CPN-UML and CPN (Maoists) in 2018, formed a single party-led majority government. This government attempted to amend the bills like the Press Council Act (1992). The aim of this amendment was to widen the PCN's jurisdiction beyond print that can monitor even online news portals, radio, television, and social media. The clauses of the amending bills had a provision of heavy amounts of charges and imprisonment in many cases, if in case the journalist who covers the news without evidence. Many civic societies including journalists' professional associations, for example, the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) had condemned the government's intervention as an exercise of its patronage power either imposing journalists' self-censorship or arresting them as the rule breaker of social order. Some blame the government's intervention charging this step as "harshly curbing media and press freedoms" (Sharma et al., 2022, p. 34).

Although, patron-client relations are not healthy practices in media business, increasing competition along with shrinking economy in a limited media market and weak delivery of committed promises of the government of Nepal might be the causes of private owners to be involved in the clientelist networks of the political forces as an alternative approach to sustain media business.

*Media owners' practices of clientelist networks*

The media intend to establish political connections in the process of hiring human resources. KC (2019) states that the media organizations of Nepal frequently change their editors in order to balance representation of different political tendencies while hiring them. The media houses also recruit those professionals who have strong affiliations with the politics (Acharya & Sharma, 2022). Many journalists, though lacking empirical findings, seem to choose their career paths to be shaped by their political affiliations (Acharya, 2018).

The impact of these patron-centric organizations can be seen in the terminating journalists who demand professional rights including basic salary and protest against the owners. Several cases led by the younger and fresher journalists who were sacked from the job without negotiating their demand had terminated amidst the COVID19 pandemic (Aryal, 2022).

Interestingly, when the media covers power holders' transgression, the media owners and the senior journalists also get threats and, in some cases, even have to face custody in revealing the wrongdoing of the power holders in Nepal. For example, Thapa (2012) illustrates that after a series of coverage on Lauda Air rent scandal on *Kantipur* daily, the then Prime Minister G. P. Koirala, who was blamed for dealing the case, took into custody the editor and the management chiefs through the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2001. In another case, when then Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal was blamed by *Kantipur* Daily for not returning the vehicle (Toyota Prado Jeep) even after 17 days of termination from the premiership. The ex-prime minister Nepal criticized the media and also provoked an editorial through the journalists and the editors who were advocating his representing party, the CPN-UML, were condemning the *Kantipur* Daily publishing an editorial in the

*Budhabar Weekly*, a mouthpiece of CPN UML, in 2010 (Thapa, 2012). Thapa further states that the vehicle was used changing its original number plate from a project of Nepal Electricity Authority to the government number plate without taking any decisions of the government.

*Clientelist networks and journalists' performance*

Although a number of professional unions of journalists work for safeguarding professionalism in the journalism profession; the functions of these organizations also seem as 'exercising as a sister organization of the political parties of Nepal' (Onta, 2006). KC (2019) states that the journalists' political connections were seen in their tendencies to be active in political life. He further points out that they often serve in party or public offices taking responsibility of a media person of the party. Despite professional representation, the journalists' associations can be seen as functioning being a client of their aligned parties. For instance, the larger organizations such as the *Press Chautari* is understood to be an association of Journalists close to the Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxist-Leninist, the NPU close to Nepali Congress and the Revolutionary Journalists' Association close to Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UNESCO, 2013, p. 76). The partisan division among journalists often have to face themselves to get threats and violence from those on the 'other' side reporting (Adhikary & Pant, 2016).

Clientelist performance was prevalent in the time when the political parties of Nepal suffered with internal conflict. Kharel (2010) states that the journalists, in general, take side of the near and dear patronage while referring to their sources as an exchange of power making their voices more than the other side covering routine-based information claiming public interest in the news. Thapa (2006) points out that the newspapers of Nepal cover the politics heavily with negativity and conflict stories taking particular faction's side on the coverage.

Though clientelism is a similar phenomenon of political parallelism, Nepali news media and political patronage exchange their mutual interest violating ethics in their news. For instance, journalists provide space for visibility to different groups or affinities of diverse political loyalties and orientations in their outlets (UNESCO, 2013). It can be observed that the political leaders not only invite the media owners and editors or journalists in their formal and informal 'get together', the media houses and the journalists also invite them in their personal and organizational programs and cover the news. For instance, it was highly covered by the media that Pushpa Kamal Dahal (a.k.a. Prachanda) the supreme commander of a decade long Maoist Insurgency, who later became a premier, had been invited as a 'guest of honor' to launch a book written by the senior editor of one of the largest media houses the *Kantipur* Publications. The book not only covered the story of the commander of a decade long Maoist Insurgency, as the credible sources, the journalist-cum-author had credited the revolutionary move of the Maoists as the foundation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (see Sharma, 2013).

It can be noted that despite performing idealistic roles of the journalists as a neutral and detached performer, they were performing interventionist character in many cases. For instance, in *Terai* unrest, in which the media portrayed the power holders as the protagonists framing their story with thematic coverage portraying positive images with in-depth coverage of them who were mobilizing resources to the media. The media criticized protestors as the antagonists portraying their negative images with a short description. These protesters were demanding to address their ethnic identity in the formulation in the new constitution and also obstructing journalists' mobility and newspapers' circulation blaming biased performance of the Nepali media (Dahal, 2018). UNESCO (2013) illustrates that some marginalized issues such as

violations of the rights of women and Dalits were receiving very poor coverage in Nepali media.

Kharel (2010) observed the role of the PCN as an ombudsman in Nepal and claimed that its subsidies very often become the causes of yellow journalism practices providing fake news and covering sensational stories. There are several media houses which published newspapers only for the record of the Press Council for granting benefits once in a year (Kharel, 2010). In a similar vein, a comprehensive study conducted about 30 years ago showed the domination of opinion and gossip journalism in the newspapers of Nepal (Aditya, 1996, p. 163). UNESCO also marked the media performance as 'individual media outlets have not made discernable attempts to enforce the code (UNESCO, 2013). In another survey study conducted by the Media Foundation – Nepal (2012) assesses the media capacity, credibility and media literacy of Nepal, and show that the journalists were facing problem while disclosing identity of subjects at risk such as rape victims, people in trauma and other marginalized issues.

In sum, the clientelist structure was a prevalent phenomenon in the political landscape of Nepal, it is also apparent while shaping media performance in the Nepali press.

**Conclusion**

The clientelist practices has vandalized the state mechanism hindering to form strong rational-legal authority, allow civic society to work independently, and control corruption establishing a mechanism of a good governance in the country (Baral, 2004; Khanal, 2004; Parajuli, 2004; Hachhethu, 2021; Pandey, 2018). This practice has also fueled the political culture that creates political division and a high level of unstable competitive political environment along with uncertainty in the politics (Hachhethu et al., 2008; Hachhethu, 2015, Hachhethu, 2021). Media has become a useful tool to disseminate

political information in order to reach out to the electorate and the party members. That is the reason the government, political parties and the leaders as a patron might be encouraged to use the media as a tool for achieving political goals. For this, these patrons might be encouraged to intervene in the media expanding clientelist networks so that they can provide news in line with their political interest.

The political culture of a particular country shapes media systems mainly on the formation of news management and the practices of journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mancini, 2018; McQuail, 1992; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The government that exists with temporal basis and frequent elections may feel the importance of visibility of the political parties and the leaders to get voters' support and hence such tendency can encourage them to control media systems of a country by playing as owner, regulator, and funder of the media (Thompson, 2000; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The political forces with clientelist structure can expand their network enabling and controlling human and capital resources through newsroom management (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The patrons appoint regulatory bodies in both private and state-owned news media, allocate budget for subsidies and attempt to regulate media endorsing press restricted legislative provision (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). Concurrently, the media owners practice clientelist functions while recruiting the professionals selecting them who have a strong political tie, frequently change editors and journalists in order to make balanced representation of different political connections. The journalists show their tendency to establish political connections to be active in political life, serve in party or public offices, and cover stories without caring about ethical guidelines. They show their loyalties advocating the political strategies of their patronage (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Ornebring, 2013; Mancini, 2018; Mellado, 2015).

Finally, the widely expanding political clientelist structure in Nepal has succeeded to establish clientelist networks influencing the power of media advocating patrons' point of view, making them visible in order to reach out the voters. For this, the government has been appointing board of directors in the state-owned media and the regulatory bodies like the Press Council Nepal. The government has been providing a budget for subsidies reducing VAT, tax and registration fee and distributing welfare advertisements to the favorable media houses. The government has also attempted to endorse press restricted bills in order to control free flow of information. The media owners, on the other hand, have been practicing clientelist functions while recruiting the professionals' selection. They have been hiring those persons who have a strong political tie, and also been changing the editors in the press frequently. The journalists have been showing their tendency to establish political connections, being active in political life and serving in party or public offices. They have been covering the story without caring ethical guidelines showing their loyalties advocating the political strategies of their patronage.

There might be several possibilities of widening media clientelism in Nepali press. These explanatory factors can be the political leaders' unhealthy intra-, and inter level competition; the weakening role of the state and political parties; losing reputation and trust in the voters, parties and the government; weakening political ties with the civic society that has created political stagnation and overall, the leaders' indifference to perform 'stable democracy'. It is also possible that the mounting corruption cases have degraded the leaders' reputation and their visibility in the media has become an essential ingredient for mobilizing voters for electoral success. The developing media systems might be another cause of practicing clientelism in media, that have been facing economic crisis, having a shrinking economy in a limited media market; long partisan history

of the press; and, the strong presence of the role of the state in the country. Finally, the role of the journalists might also be the possible cause of expanding media clientelism in Nepal. Since the very beginning, the journalists have been practicing mission journalism advocating aligned party or leader's ideologies; establishing political ideological base professional unions in which they lack to perform professional solidarity in the profession; and, above all, they possess inadequate training and academic background that can support them to perform their professionalism. Despite immense scope to explore the possibilities of increasing media clientelism in Nepali press, there is still little attention paid to date in the field. Hence, to understand the exact phenomenon of clientelist media in Nepal, conducting new research that reveals the way media perform social realities exploring the practices of watchdog function, such as framing, while scrutinizing the power holders' transgression such as corruption scandals, for example, can be a special contribution.

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# English Language Teacher Professional Development: Teacher Educators' Perceptions and Experiences

Dammar Singh Saud

With rapid changes and advancements in teaching English language education and the needs of learners, it has become essential for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to be updated periodically by enhancing their attitudes, skills, and knowledge through different teacher professional development activities and strategies. English language teachers are required to keep upgrading themselves to help EFL learners acquire English effectively. This research aims to explore EFL teacher educators' perceptions of the importance of teacher professional development and identify their experienced activities for teacher professional development. This research is conducted at a university in Nepal with the participation of eight EFL teacher educators involved in individual interviews. The interpretive research paradigm and case study research method are used for the study. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis are used for data collection and analysis. The results show that most of them have positive perceptions towards the importance of EFL professional development and offer suggestions on activities for English proficiency, teaching pedagogy, digital skills, and research skills for teacher professional development that administrators of the university can consult to build skilled teaching professionals who can meet various needs of present learners.

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**Introduction**

The importance of the English language is widely recognized, especially in EFL settings. The English language has become one of the significant needs for the people of the world in the age of globalization because it is used as a contact language worldwide. However, different people use the English language differently based on their nation. According to Shrestha (2015), English is used as a primary language for both personal and official purposes in countries such as Britain, the USA, Australia, and so on. English is used as a second language for official purposes in some countries such as India, Nigeria, Singapore, etc. Finally, some nations such as Nepal, Japan, Poland, etc. use English as a foreign language.

There is a difference between foreign language learning and second language acquisition. Learning the target language in the context of learners' mother tongue environment is called foreign language learning whereas second language acquisition refers to learning the target language in the context of the target language environment. According to Sharma (2010), people of Nepal who are learning English as a target language in the Nepalese context can be a suitable example of foreign language learning. And obviously, Nepali speakers learning English in Canada or Australia is an example of second language acquisition.

Therefore, in those countries where English is not commonly spoken, the professional development of English teachers is highly important to sustain and enhance the quality of the education provided. Teachers' professional development concerns the growth and development of teachers in their professional roles so that they can perform at their best. Teacher professional development programs enable teachers to use their knowledge and skills effectively and efficiently in their language classrooms. Teacher Professional Development is a long and continuous process that commences from teacher pre-service education until their retirement. Professional

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development can be defined as any attempt that increases a teacher's professional knowledge in means of content, pedagogy, and technology. This development can be achieved via various means such as attending conferences or seminars, receiving in-service training, attending workshops, reviewing academic literature, and receiving higher education.

According to Joshi (2012), teacher development includes formal and informal means of helping teachers master new skills, widen their knowledge, and develop an innovative insight into their pedagogy and profession because teacher professional development contributes to their holistic development. Similarly, Sharma and Shrestha (2013) state that teachers acquire knowledge from time to time from different sources in the teaching profession because they face several cases, problems, or projects and need to consult many other useful sources which are the sources of teachers' knowledge in their profession.

A range of activities, whether they are formal or informal, are carried out to develop a teacher intellectually, socially, and professionally. Richards and Farrell (2005) mention eleven strategies that facilitate the professional development of English language teachers. They are workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, and action research. Formal programs like teacher training, workshops, seminars, etc. are introduced to teachers so that they can familiarize themselves with the innovations in the teaching and learning field. Similarly, teachers are encouraged to intensify the skills and knowledge required in their profession from their perspective (Asmari, 2016). Once teachers realize and understand the real spirit of teacher development, they can focus their activities on developing them professionally. Such teachers take a risk to experiment with new techniques and skills while teaching in the classroom and feel free to learn from other learning opportunities.

The main purpose of the study was to explore EFL teacher educators' perceptions of the importance of teacher professional development and identify their experienced activities for teacher professional development. To achieve this goal, two research questions were formulated. The first question sought to explore how EFL teacher educators perceive the importance of teacher professional development. The second question aimed to identify the types of activities that these educators have encountered in their professional development experiences. By addressing these questions, the study sought to provide insights into the perceptions and experiences of EFL teacher educators in promoting effective teacher professional development.

**Literature Review**

Teachers from the beginning of their careers face various kinds of students and institutions, which may result in an inevitable struggle to comply with all these challenges. Professional development programs seem to be one of the ways for maintaining a high standard of teaching and retaining a high-quality teaching staff. It is believed that the quality of teachers' learning experience may link to the quality of learners' achievements. English language teachers are required to keep upgrading themselves to help EFL learners acquire English effectively. Teacher Professional Development for teachers in developing countries is an emerging emphasis despite limited resources.

Bharati and Chalise (2017) reported that English language teachers are in the process of getting trained and becoming professional teachers in a relatively sophisticated centrally located town in Nepal. Though it is a positive sign, they are still not fully applying the skills, ideas, techniques, etc. which they acquired in different professional development events in their real teaching-learning settings. Bhatt (2021) mentioned that methods like reading printed materials, Internet and ICT tools, action research, reflection,

and collaboration among teachers are standard for self-directed teacher professional development in a remote part of Nepal. These studies highlight the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers in Nepal. While some teachers are not fully applying their training, others are taking the initiative to engage in self-directed professional development. These findings emphasize the need for continued support and resources for professional development initiatives to ensure that teachers can improve their teaching practices and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.

Joshi et al., (2018) mentioned that Nepalese EFL teachers have positive experiences with different teacher professional development strategies. The EFL teachers have benefited mostly from self-directed (own teaching experience and self-monitoring), profession-related (workshops, seminars, and conferences), and peer-supported (learning from colleagues) and less benefited from research-focused (case analysis, mentoring, and ELT journals) TPD strategies. They also recommended that there is a need for ongoing TPD activities for EFL teachers in Nepal (Joshi et al., (2018). The study contributes to the literature on TPD strategies in EFL teaching by providing insight into the experiences of Nepalese EFL teachers. The findings of this study may be useful to educational policymakers and TPD program designers in Nepal and other similar contexts.

Nepali EFL teachers do not often seem to find themselves professionally skilled, but they look forward to receiving support either from an institutional or external level. In-service teachers are still not given opportunities for professional development besides some very short training and workshops. For instance, the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) and the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) conduct in-service training workshops and seminars on different aspects of English language teaching, including teaching methodology, materials development, and assessment. These training and workshops are,

however, questioned against the quality of the teacher trainers and training sessions themselves. Although some EFL teachers attempt to learn something new, they cannot implement the new skills due to the lack of teaching resources and over-loaded teaching hours (Sah, 2015). However, there is high motivation and enthusiasm among new-generation EFL teachers for their professional development. The literature indicates that Nepali EFL teachers require more sustained and effective professional development opportunities. Institutions and external agencies should work towards addressing the existing gaps in training and resources to enable teachers to improve their teaching skills and provide better education to their students.

Meanwhile, Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) contended that professional development is the method teachers use to advance themselves. Its significant influence may be seen in raising educational standards in general, as well as helping to improve student learning and teachers' instruction. Mizell (2010) argued that continuing professional development includes both formal and informal activities, such as discussions among coworkers, independent reading, and research, observing coworkers' work, or receiving other learning from peers. Formal activities include conferences, seminars, workshops, collaborative learning among work team members, and courses at colleges or universities. Overall, teacher professional development is a critical strategy for enhancing the quality of education and improving student learning outcomes. Teachers who engage in regular professional development activities, both formal and informal, are more likely to stay updated on new teaching methods, technologies, and trends, and enhance their skills and knowledge.

Chang et al. (2014) showed that language teacher educators, whether professors or education officials, require continuing professional development to meet various demands in a rapidly changing society. They also argued for alternative ways of enhancing

professional learning, which sees professors and education officials as agents of change in their professional development. Gnawali (2015) reported that there is a reciprocal relationship between English language teacher associations and the EFL teachers' professional development. These studies indicate that continuous professional development is essential for language teacher educators and EFL teachers to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies. EFL teachers are generally supported in their professional development through different professional development events organized by teacher associations. Such professional development events can provide an effective platform for EFL teachers to engage in continuous professional development activities and stay updated on new teaching methods, technologies, and trends.

Awasthi (2003) stated that the policies of the government related to teacher education and professional development in Nepal are not consistent and effective. As a result, there is a huge gap between the policies and practices regarding teacher education and professional development in the Nepali context. Though there are several provisions for teacher education and professional development, the implementation part of it often becomes less effective and fruitful. The study suggests the need for consistent and effective policies to improve teacher education and professional development in Nepal.

Nugroho et al. (2022) showed two factors affecting the EFL teachers' acknowledgment of the importance of language proficiency PD activities: the need to maintain and improve language proficiency and the benefits of proficiency for teaching and learning. They also recommended that Indonesian EFL teachers develop self-awareness of the importance of improving their skills not only pedagogically but also professionally and realize that PD for language proficiency is imperative to help them keep their professionalism high. This aligns with the call for continuous professional development of language

teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2011) and the recognition that language teachers need to engage in language learning activities themselves to improve their language skills (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Overall, these studies shed light on the importance of language proficiency for EFL teachers and highlight the need for continuous professional development to improve their language skills.

Gautam (2020) found that English teachers in Nepal attended three kinds of events that include training programs to learn technology, events to learn about the online resources for English language education, and teacher professional development programs to develop their knowledge and teaching skills. Participation in these events made English teachers digitally confident to run the classes online during COVID-19 in Nepal and increased awareness of the integration of online resources in English language teaching. The study provides valuable insights into the role of professional development programs and events in enhancing teachers' digital literacy and promoting the use of online resources in English language teaching.

According to Murray (2010), professional development helps teachers come out of their isolation and enables them to talk about and get rid of any potential annoyance and problems they could experience in their profession. Mahmoudia and Ozkana (2015) argue that teacher professional development provides opportunities for teachers to discover new roles, develop new instructional techniques and methods of teaching, refine their practice, and develop themselves both professionally and personally. Together, these studies suggest that professional development is a critical component of teacher training and education. It can help teachers to improve their instructional techniques, enhance their knowledge and skills, and develop a greater sense of professional satisfaction. Furthermore, professional development can provide teachers with the support and resources they need to succeed in their profession and overcome the challenges they may face.

Silvhiany (2022) reported that teachers relied on attending webinars as one of the ways to do professional development. They also joined the learning communities to discuss innovation in English language teaching, to get teaching materials, to collaborate with other English teachers, and to share ideas about teaching English. Therefore, he argued that there is a need for creating a virtual space for teachers to learn and exchange ideas with other teachers as a form of continuing professional development. The OECD (2009) highlighted some major functions of teacher professional development such as updating and enhancing teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills for effective language teaching and learning process. Together, these studies suggest that professional development plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of language teaching and learning. The studies emphasize the need for continuous training and development opportunities, particularly in virtual learning spaces. These opportunities can provide teachers with the resources they need to stay current and improve their skills, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes for their students.

Despite the growing importance of teacher professional development (PD) in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) education, there is still a lack of research on the experiences and strategies of EFL teacher educators for effective PD, particularly at the university level. Although some studies have explored the importance of PD for EFL teachers, little is known about the perspectives of EFL teacher educators, who play a crucial role in designing and implementing effective PD programs. Therefore, a gap in the literature exists regarding the experiences and strategies of EFL teacher educators for effective PD, which this study aims to address.

## Research Method

The choice of research paradigm and method is a crucial aspect of any research study. In this regard, for my study on teacher

professional development in EFL classrooms in Nepal, I chose to use the interpretive research paradigm and a case study research method. The interpretive research paradigm was chosen based on the research purpose and questions as it assumes that individuals have different perspectives and observe social reality from multiple perspectives (Guba, 1990). Additionally, Cohen and Crabtree (2006) argue that the interpretive research paradigm focuses on individual perceptions, personal constructs, negotiated meaning, and definitions of situations, making it an appropriate approach for exploring teacher educators' experiences and perspectives of professional development in EFL classrooms. Furthermore, as interpretive researchers believe in the reality of people's subjective experiences of the world and the ontology is socially constructed (Taylor & Medina, 2013), this paradigm aligns well to understand the experiences and perspectives of teacher educators in the Nepalese context. To achieve this aim, a case study research method was used as it is a qualitative method of inquiry that enables the in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon within a specific context. Therefore, the use of an interpretive research paradigm and case study research method in this study allows for an in-depth exploration of teacher educators' experiences and perspectives of professional development in EFL classrooms in Nepal.

**Research Site and Participants**

I have used a qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perceptions of the importance of EFL teacher professional development. The participants were eight EFL teacher educators from a university in Nepal. They were purposely chosen based on the consideration related to the present research's aims. The criteria employed to select the participants were EFL teachers who had direct experiences of teacher professional development and were open to sharing their thoughts and experiences regarding it. Five participants had teaching experiences of less than ten years while three senior

teachers had taught English for more than ten years. All participants were from the Faculty of Education at a university in Nepal. The participants consisted of six male and two female teachers, with an average age range between 30 to 45 years. All the participants were from the Sudurpaschim province of Nepal.

## Research Instruments

The interview guide was used as the research instrument for data collection. The interview was conducted individually with eight EFL teacher educators of the same faculty at a public university in Nepal. The interviews involved semi-structured ones and generally open-ended questions were asked. I gave them a sufficient place to tell their experiences with the phenomenon, recall their experiences, and put their views and perspectives. The language used in this interview is English for this would be easier for them to convey some special terms in this area. The time and place of the interview were set based on the researcher's and participants' convenience. Apart from the interview, I also made field notes during the data collection period though it was not highly systematic, but captured their attitudes and actions which helped me match what they shared in an interview. I also took field notes during the interview process to collect useful data for the study. Similarly, reflective writings and reviewing related literature were used for generating information related to phenomena. A mobile phone was used to record the interview with the permission of the research participants. All the conversations between the researcher and the interviewees are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed into a full text.

## Data Analysis

The collected data from interviews were analyzed and proceeded with the following activities: data transcribing, data coding, data condensation, data display, thematizing, and conclusion

drawing and verification. The broad two themes i.e., participants' views on the importance of teacher professional development and their experienced activities for teacher professional development emerged from the analysis of the data.

**Results**

As the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of EFL teacher educators towards the importance of teacher professional development and supporting activities for teacher professional development, the results were presented in two broad categories i.e., participants' views on the importance of teacher professional development and their experienced activities for supporting teacher professional development.

*Importance of Teacher Professional Development*

Through the interview, all participants show full awareness of the importance of EFL professional development. Interestingly, in the interviews, the participants shared similar views and ideas in understanding teacher professional development to improve and update their knowledge and skills in teaching and English proficiency. They perceived teacher professional development as a part of their responsibilities as a professional teacher. They viewed professional development as an important activity that they must undergo.

For example, during the interview, participant 2 shared their thoughts on the importance of professional development. With thoughtful expressions on their face, they stated, "Not only can professional development broaden and refresh our knowledge, but it can also enrich and tighten the social aspects of our professionalism." They went on to explain how engaging in professional development activities allows for the sharing of ideas and experiences with colleagues, leading to a deeper understanding of the profession and the ability to collaborate more effectively. It was evident that

Participant 2 believed in the value of professional development not just for individual growth but also for the betterment of the teaching profession. It is also remarkable that some participants view EFL professional development as a necessity for self-improvement, giving themselves more opportunities in their teaching career while others think that EFL professional development is an obvious trend for development.

Similarly, Participant 1 spoke passionately about their views on EFL professional development during the interview. They described it as a golden opportunity to maintain, upgrade, review, and improve their professional knowledge. Their eyes shone with enthusiasm as they emphasized the importance of continuously engaging in professional development activities. For them, it was crucial to keep their teaching practices up-to-date and relevant. As they continued to share their perspective, it was evident that they believed professional development allowed for the exploration of new teaching strategies, methods, and materials that could enhance their students' learning outcomes. The participant stated that professional development was essential for EFL teachers to keep up with the changing trends and demands of the language teaching industry. They added that through EFL professional development, they could expand their knowledge, develop new skills, and gain a better understanding of the language learning process. Participant 1's enthusiasm for EFL professional development was contagious, and it was clear that they were committed to their professional growth and the growth of their students.

During the interview, most of the participants agreed that professional development was necessary to refresh and recharge teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. They emphasized that professional development activities enabled teachers to meet the demand of teaching standards. The participants also acknowledged that the professional development activities they had joined generally

dealt with pedagogy-related issues. Participant 3 spoke with conviction, sharing their belief that EFL professional development helped them to learn better ways to teach and engage in the latest trends in teaching. Participant 4 echoed this sentiment, stating that it was important to continue to acquire and update their professional knowledge. They shared that they were afraid of falling behind others in this digital era and felt that professional development was necessary to stay current. It was clear that these participants valued their professional growth and saw professional development to improve their teaching practices and meet the demands of the changing landscape of language education.

Furthermore, some of the participants shared their awareness of the need to stay updated with the latest innovations in their social and academic settings. Participant 5 expressed their commitment to engaging in EFL professional development to meet the increasingly higher standards of learners, schools, and society. They shared that they were always looking for opportunities to upgrade their knowledge and skills to provide better quality education to their students. Similar perspectives were shared by almost all of the participants, highlighting the importance of continuous professional development in the field of EFL teaching. It was evident that the participants recognized the significance of staying current in their profession and were willing to invest time and effort into their professional development to ensure that they could meet the evolving needs of their students and the education system.

*Activities to Support Teacher Professional Development*

Many activities are recommended for EFL professional development based on the analysis of the results of this study. Generally, they can be put into four main categories: English proficiency, teaching methods, information communication technology, and research.

*Activities for Enhancing English Proficiency*

During the interviews, most of the participants emphasized

the importance of English proficiency for EFL teachers. They believed that having a high level of English proficiency is essential for building trust with their students and being able to deliver effective lessons. As Participant 1 stated, "English proficiency is the top priority for an English teacher."

To maintain and improve their English proficiency, participants suggested various strategies. Some participants recommended creating social networking groups, particularly Facebook groups, as a community of practice. These groups would allow teachers to stay connected and practice using English regularly. Participant 2 stated, "We can share our knowledge, and ideas and discuss some issues about teaching, and using English in a Facebook group or any social networking group."

Others mentioned practising speaking with their colleagues whenever they met on campus. This provided them with an excellent opportunity to use English naturally, which supported enhancing their English language proficiency. Participant 5 shared, "Whenever we have free time, we talk to each other in English. This helps us to enhance our English proficiency, and we can learn from each other." The participants highlighted the importance of English proficiency for EFL teachers and suggested various strategies to maintain and improve their language proficiency.

*Activities for Enhancing Teaching Pedagogy*

The participants in the study emphasized the importance of teaching methodology in EFL professional development. According to participants 7 and 8, there are various ways for teachers to exchange ideas about teaching English. They suggested that teachers could attend workshops and seminars where they can have direct discussions with experts in the field. In today's digital age, teachers can also take advantage of online platforms to learn about the latest teaching strategies and methods while juggling their busy schedules. Additionally, teachers

can share their teaching ideas by conducting class observation sessions. During these sessions, one teacher sits in on another teacher's class and provides feedback, which can promote a sense of belonging among colleagues and sharpen teaching capacity, as noted by participants 4 and 7.

The participants in the study also emphasized the importance of teacher support and collaboration. Participants 3 and 5 noted that conducting class observation sessions can promote a sense of belonging among teachers in the same faculty. Participants 1 and 4 added that this practice can provide teachers with much-needed support from their colleagues. In addition to class observation sessions, participants suggested that teacher support can also be facilitated through informal conversations and mentorship programs. Participant 6 shared their experience of being mentored by a senior colleague, which helped them to improve their teaching skills and build confidence in their profession. The participants in the study acknowledged the importance of teaching methodology and collaboration in EFL professional development.

*Activities for Enhancing Digital Skills*

Among the activities to support EFL professional development, applying ICT in teaching is mentioned as a 'tool to make the lessons more interesting' (participants 2 and 3). Therefore, teachers should be involved in short courses to learn about how to appeal to students to our lessons by applying information communication technology. They shared how YouTube videos and other online courses can be utilized for enhancing digital competencies among EFL teacher educators. Similarly, they emphasized the role of webinars and other online workshops and training for developing digital skills in EFL teacher educators to effectively integrate ICT in language classrooms. Some participants reported that the academic institutions should 'give financial support so that teachers can have access to this'. (Participants 3 and 6).

Participants 2 and 8 contended that the future generation cannot accept a teacher who is poor at IT skills.

Participants in the study emphasized the importance of using information communication technology (ICT) in EFL teaching to make lessons more engaging. They recommended that teachers attend short courses to learn how to effectively integrate ICT in language classrooms. They also suggested utilizing resources such as YouTube videos, online courses, webinars, and other online workshops to develop digital skills in EFL teacher educators. Some participants highlighted the need for academic institutions to provide financial support for teachers to access these resources. Additionally, some participants stressed that IT skills are becoming increasingly important for EFL teachers to have to effectively teach the future generation.

*Activities for Enhancing Research Skills*

Despite not being given much attention towards research projects from participants, this activity cannot be missed if teachers expect to improve their teaching-learning performances. Most of them agree that research is a very useful tool for reflecting on and evaluating their performance for improvement. However, a few participants are engaged in action research and are involved in publishing journal articles for their professional development. Therefore, they believe that research is essential to the teaching profession, contributing greatly to their professional development. Participants 2 and 6 suggested that different teacher professional development events should be conducted to develop EFL teacher educators' research skills and motivate them for being continuously involved in research activities for their professional development. Most participants argued that there should be a community where scores of teachers' research and share ideas to keep pace with the constantly changing situation of the teaching-learning environment and society in general.

Participants in the study agreed that research is a valuable tool for improving teaching and learning, but not many are actively engaged in it. Some participants are publishing articles and believe that research is crucial for professional development. Participants suggest that professional development events should be held to improve research skills and motivate teachers to continue researching. They also suggest creating a community where teachers can share ideas and keep up with the constantly changing teaching and learning environment.

**Discussions and Conclusions**

The results of the research show that all these EFL teacher educators have gained an insightful understanding of the importance of EFL professional development. Most of them have positive perceptions towards the importance of EFL professional development and make suggestions about the supporting activities for teacher professional development that the administrator of the university can consult to build skilled teaching professionals who can meet the various needs of present learners. Their expectations and beliefs towards EFL professional development confirm the previous studies in this area. Teachers' responses to EFL professional development are clear evidence for the administrator of the university to pay more attention to organizing activities so that teachers have more opportunities to develop their professional skills.

Four main categories of professional development activities were identified based on the participants' suggestions. Firstly, teachers were recommended to have adequate English proficiency levels, which could be achieved through small communities where they can interact and learn together. However, it was noted that this may be challenging given teachers' busy work schedules. Secondly, teaching pedagogy was identified as an area of focus, with class observation encouraged among teachers to help them develop their

teaching skills and stay connected with the faculty. In addition, workshops or seminars should be organized more frequently to keep teachers updated with the latest trends in teaching pedagogy. Thirdly, teachers need to be skilled in using IT, given the increasing demand for teaching English in the digital world. Short courses should be provided by universities to equip teachers with the necessary IT skills and boost their confidence in using technology. Finally, the study emphasized the importance of research in professional development and recommended that teacher professional development events be conducted to develop EFL teacher educators' research skills and motivate them to be continuously involved in research activities. Increased research activity can lead to innovative teaching practices that can better meet the needs of learners.

In conclusion, the present study highlights the importance of professional development for EFL teachers and recommends that universities should pay more attention to organizing activities that focus on English proficiency, teaching pedagogy, IT skills, and research. By providing EFL teacher educators opportunities for professional development, universities can better equip their professors to meet asmarilearners' diverse needs and enhance the quality of English language education.

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# Secondary Level Teachers' Professional Development through Research and Development Project

Laxmi Sharma

This study explores the lived experiences of Nepali public secondary-level school teachers in taking initiatives for their professional development, and the support they received in research and development projects. The data were collected through conducting in-depth interviews with five teachers teaching in public schools run under the education trust of Pokhara and Kathmandu in Nepal. Findings revealed that the Research and Development Project introduced in these selected schools turned out to be supportive of teachers 'professional development in several ways. Their involvement in the Research and Development Project offered them opportunities to form a new identity and have developed skills in self-reflection. This opportunity has contributed to creating a positive impact on improving classroom practices and enhancing teachers' professional development. Future research might explore modes of effective interventions for helping teachers to grow in their professional practices.

**Keywords:** Research benefits, professional development, improved classroom practices

## Introduction

Teachers need opportunities for professional development. Activities such as training, workshop, excursion opportunities, and research

can enhance teachers' professional knowledge and skills. Teachers' involvement in research activities not only develop research skills but also benefits them for self-enrichment (Pring, 2000). Teachers' involvement in activities like that helps them develop a new knowledge base as well as sharpen their reflexive learning experience (Wood & Bennett, 2000). More specifically, research provides teachers with evidence-based practice opportunities. Due to such benefits, scholars (e.g., Cochran-Smith 2001; Grisane, 2010) claimed that research is a mandatory move in education for the professional growth of teachers. Teachers' engagement in research, more specifically action research, helps them find solutions to the problems they are facing in their workplaces. Participation in research addressing their workplace problems helps them develop new insight and that ultimately contributes to higher performance in their instructional practices.

Morales (2016) elaborates on the case of the Philippines mentioning that research that teachers do has been useful for their self-development as they explore the issues encountered during their professional practice. Similarly, Hine (2013) believes that research helps teachers and other stakeholders to find a solution to the conditions faced in the teaching period and further enhances lifelong learning (Ulla et al., 2017). Thus, research and professional development of teachers are interlinked issues.

In Nepal, several initiatives have been taken to improve the quality of education. The development of teachers' professional knowledge and skills has remained one of the important areas of quality enhancement initiatives. Most of the teacher professional development programs are training-based. The research component in teacher professional development is still neglected in Nepal's case. Many studies have been done on the professional development of teachers like mandatory action research for promotion, but how teachers' engagement in research contributes to teachers' self-

development and institutional strength has not been documented by research yet.

As teachers are involved in reflection on their experiences and intentional practices, it plays a transformative role in their professional life (Ilisko et al., 2011). Shrestha (2018) carried out research on the topic of teacher professional development in Nepal. He reviewed existing professional development activities in Nepal and brings out some opportunities and challenges connected to them like consultation with the teachers priorly while selecting the topic. He suggested some improvement mechanisms. Bhattarai and Tudu's (2019) case study on the perception and practices of professional development in Nepal revealed teachers' positive and negative perceptions of the professional development activities they were involved in. Likewise, Pokhrel and Bhera (2016) have talked about the expectation of teachers from TPD programs and Dhungana et al. (2021) have talked about the contextual TPD framework required for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills. All of the research studies do not cover the issue of the connection between research and the professional development of teachers in Nepal. But this is a must-do topic as the literature suggests that there exists a connection between research and the TPD of teachers. The research component must be made one of the core parts of the professional development of teachers. Kennedy (2016) highlights that research-based approaches are to enhance the professionalism of teachers as they help to upgrade practice and that is possible only when policymakers offer such opportunities. Research directly helps in teachers' professional growth as it allows them to collaborate among them, opening the door for them building with the reflection of their practice (Desimone, 2011). Likewise, Hammond et al. (2009) argue that research is a mandatory approach for the best professional development of teachers. When research is done by teachers it helps to enhance their learning (Kennedy, 2016). In this connection,

understanding how teachers perceive the Research and Development Project's relevance in their professional growth and development is important. As there is limited research in this issue, this study on the exploration of teachers' experiences of their engagement in a Research and Development project conducted by a school will contribute to fulfilling the gap that exists in the literature.

## Professional Development of Teachers through Research and Development Project

The engagement of teachers in research and development projects has been widely discussed in the research literature. Some studies have also reported that involving teachers in research helps them to develop a deeper understanding of the problems they face in their respective workplaces. The World Bank conducted research in 2019 about the effectiveness of TPD in Nepal and reported that the training has been beneficial in improving classroom management, applying student-centered techniques, and assessment management. Their findings also relate to what Messiou and Ainscow (2015) earlier claimed by stating that teacher development should emerge within the classroom, having close connections and getting expertly available within the school for common practice. In improving school practice, action research is the best tool for such an opportunity. For teachers' growth, professional development through their experience-based research sounds useful and timely and can add value to their profession (McNiff, 2011; Vaughan, 2020).

In this changing world of academic growth and quality concerns in education, teachers are the change makers. They are potential agents as they engage in classroom teaching and what they do makes a difference (Morales, 2016). They can realize, reflect, explore, solve, and apply what is found through their research to improve education. This can ultimately result in improvement of the skills in teaching and increased productivity of teachers and

students, (Hine, 2013). Another research in Nepal by Adhikari and Bista (2019.) critically reviewed the present condition of the professional development of teachers in Nepal and recommended better plans and improvements informed through research. At the policy level, the School Sector Development Plan of Nepal 2016 – 2023 aimed at strengthening the different measures of PD of teachers through various approaches (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2019). Teachers are expected to identify their problems and seek solutions to them through research which can improve their pedagogical practices (Grima & Farrell, 2017). Morales (2016) has also stated that teacher-initiated research also makes them more accountable for teaching and students' performance. Research can result in rewards and uplifting tools for teachers as its mandatory in promotion as they reflect and restart teaching (Burns, 2010; McNiff, 2010). Furthermore, classroom research provides teachers with professional skills and competencies, which are crucial for transformative education (Johnson and Johnson, 2012; Hine & Lavery, 2014).

**Teacher's Quest for Positionality as Researchers**

Studies have reported that teachers face challenges in doing research, and this creates constraints for them to upgrade their professional path. For instance, Ulla's (2018) study focused on the perceived benefits and challenges of doing research in the Philippines and revealed that teachers did research out of self-interest unlike for professional carving and they found financial load, over-allocated teaching load, and lack of research competencies in them to do research. In the same way, the research carried out by Dehghan and Sahragard (2015) in Iran found that teachers had a good sense of the meaning of research and its values but could not do research because they believed research meant only for experts and not concerning classroom purposes.

Moreover, a study in Malaysia by Norasmah et al. (2016) concluded that despite having a positive response towards research, teachers faced the problem of finance, time, and lack of adequate support in carrying out research. So, before presenting a research agenda to teachers, consideration of time, money and usefulness should be made. As many ideas are mixed, the studies presented above did not highlight the experiences of teachers' professional growth through research and development projects in Nepal on which the present study focused on. Similarly, Poudel (2022) explored the efforts made for improving the quality of teacher education and found that limited (and largely absent) coordinated plans among teacher education institutions, schools, and regulating bodies negatively affected the professional development opportunities for teachers. There exists a research gap in exploring the experiences of teachers in being engaged in Research and Development projects. Therefore, this study has attempted to answer the research question: What are the experiences of teachers regarding their professional growth through the yearly research and development projects in Nepal?

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on Stenhouse's (1975) framework which aims at making the classroom the center of inquiry demanding joint ventures of teachers and researchers uniformly this opines the role of teachers just like researchers for the improvement of educational practices and setting benchmarks in course of mobility in schools where research is the engaged practices. Liddicoat (2016) puts forth that when teachers in school are engaged in research that results in higher productivity the research they do is factual and evidential. Rodgers (2002) asserts that this framework proves the role of teachers as potential researchers as they have enough experiences to understand the in-depth reality of school (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Though it's quite contributing teachers as researchers have

to undergo some obstacles developing them as researchers ranging from lack of confidence to availability of resources (Peterson, 2004), and this further contributes to making teachers empowered to do classroom research relying on their varied practices and encourages them to reflect and apply from unlearning and relearning (Cochran-Smith, 2006). I have garlanded my research in this framework as a research and development project is introduced to unpack the existing problems in school and inside the classroom as well as growing teachers uplifting them to change their role of teachers-to-teachers researchers as teachers when they use classroom and beyond the subject of study, they prove to be the key persons in the school ensuring better learning environment and their growth too.

## Research Context, Method, Participants, and Data Generation
## Context of the Research

This study outlined teachers' experiences of classroom research and its role in their professional development through their Research and Development (R & D) Project. The research was carried out in two schools run by the Nepal government under an education trust where an R & D project is launched for ensuring teachers' growth which is carried out every year with equal payment seeking proposals from teachers. This project allowed teachers to carry out research on their own as per their interest area with the course of action in purpose to the research and development cell without disturbing their teaching load and other responsibilities.

The present study was carried out within the framework of qualitative research with purposive sampling. Participants were selected with the assumption that they have rich experience in the point of research interest (Patton, 2002). Through interviews (Creswell, 2007), the narrative inquiry method was used to unfold teachers' experiences of professional growth with research and development projects (Clandinin & Connelly, 2013). All participants

were from two public schools run under the education trust of Nepal teaching at the secondary level from 9-12. Two males and three females are taken to maintain the diversity of teachers. Those who were involved in the research were chosen from all four departments, namely Mathematics, Social Studies, English, Science, and Nepali. The main method in analyzing the interview data was qualitative as it explores, describes, and analyses lived experiences, interests, and concerns (Phillion, 2002). The participants of the study were Rama, a Mathematics teacher, with more than ten years of experience, Mutu an English teacher, with more than twenty -two years of teaching experience evidence; Shalu, a Social Studies teacher, with fifteen years of experience, Raj, a Science teacher, with twelve years of experience; and Raj, a Nepali teacher with fourteen years of experience. Teachers from Kathmandu and Pokhara participated voluntarily, and all the names are pseudo-names. All the participants were interviewed at their convenient time and the interview data were subjected to thematic analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2019) to do justice to the research question. The length of each interview was between 30 minutes to one hour. All the interviews were transcribed, coded, categorized, and analyzed in different ways for theme generation. Initially, each of the relevant data was provided with appropriate codes, the codes were analyzed and put into appropriate categories and finally, the categories were further combined into themes. The same themes were presented as broader findings of the study and were elaborated through sub-themes and data extracts. In this process, the data were gathered using a multi-step and cooperative procedure (Gelman et al., 1995).

## Findings and Discussion

This study has generated four major themes and subthemes based on the research question. They include identity construction, the opportunity to learn through reflective practice, and burden. These

themes have further sub-themes as illustrated in the section that follows.

*Identity*

This study found that engagement in research and development work was one of the components for them to develop their identity.

*Professional Identity*

In the interview, most of the teachers revealed that the research and development training is giving them a sort of recognition and identity for them. Though they are part of it for the first time in their professional career. Rama, one of the participants said;

> "*I was part of it and obliged to do it as it is asked by the school authority and was an academic program for teachers. I did it with ups and down and now I realize it is somehow useful for me as my research work has been compiled in the book and I am benefiting too. It will support my promotion and other recognition concerning work and competence.*"

This study also finds that teachers are creating their identity in their workplace via this R & D project and that directly aligns with the finding of (Owen, 2015) as he utters that research is a supportive pillar of identity creation and career finding for teachers and those who involve in it. Similarly, another participant, Mutu said;

> "*I am happy with it as it is to create my competence by revealing my potential and practices which could be useful for me and my colleagues and of course, it is giving me a new identity as a researche*r."

> "*Time has changed. I am finding it useful as it has added one more brick to my learning ladder and is, of course, making me known in the school community. It further provided me with a platform for showcasing my practices and the problems I faced. I could explore and be part of the learning community and enhance my professionalism.*" (Raj)

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From the interview excerpts, it is obvious that teachers were initially not aware of what they are going to get but later they realized its worth in making them able to get identity. The data presented above also align with other scholars. In the case of identity, they have positive responses towards the research project in their profession al development and have demonstrated their new identity as a researcher. This has similarities to the findings of Ulla (2018) who argues that research has a positive impact on the lives of teachers and participants. It is so as because of research they can add their profile. My participants also expected that it will help them to create a professional identity with varied opportunities.

Likewise, one of the participants, Raj shared

"*It is useful for me as it added one more brick in my career…*"

This viewpoint also coincides with the findings of Hine (2013) who asserted that research helps teachers to tackle their classroom issues and offers the opportunity to grow and help them to have growth in their professionalism.

b. Promotional help

Another subtheme I generated was promotional help. Many participants opined its relevancy in their promotion in the days to come. They have a positive response regarding promotion. Rani said;

"*I think it can be useful in my promotion as it is liked to academic research and obviously will count .it has enhanced my capacity and my practice too.*" (Rama)

Likewise, Mutu asserted:

"*I am working so hard as one day is counted toward my promotion. These days action research is mandatory even appraisal forms too.*" (Mutu)

"*As you sow so shall you reap? I think it will award me in getting higher points than the friend in other arenas too as it's a call from the school.*" (Rama)

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The findings drawn from the interview revealed that after the completion of the R & D project, they are hopeful of getting a promotion and further expect to have high points in the appraisal form. It is noted that research is helpful in the job promotion of teachers. The R & D project also dealt with classroom issues. Teachers are hopeful of getting a promotion as it adds a brick to their success ladder Likewise, participants' perceptions also match with the ideas of (Desimone & Garret 2015). They believe PD is more rated when it is connected to classroom lessons. As participants revealed that they got to explore their classroom problems and issues they could find solutions and mastery of classroom issues is seen. After exploration of classroom issues and addressing the issues in action research, it helped them to get promoted. From this, it is seen that research is also helpful in adding promotion in teachers' careers which helped them to grow professionally.

*Opportunity*

Two sub-themes have been drawn from the data I collected concerning their responses to the opportunity brought by their involvement in the R&D project.

*a. Access to collegial community*

The teachers said that they got access to the collegial community while they were involved in the R & D projects. Mutu, Rama, Raj, and Salu's opinions below illustrate this concern.

> "*I had mixed opinions regarding this project as it was new and going together with normal teaching would sound not that easy. But when I started getting into it, I knew it was worth it when I got to be in contact with friends and colleagues and it paved the way for the formation of a community of friends with a caring and sharing culture. It brought integrity and kept me away from isolated practices.*" (Mutu)

> "*I am thankful to the organization as I got the opportunity*

*to earn, learn and speed up my potential as a teacher-researcher." (Rama).*

As Rani also said;

> "*In my case, I am quite positive as this project supported me in developing my professionalism. I learned something new than before and have opened the door for future learning as I am involved in many professional communities. Secondly, I got ideas for exploring my classroom practices and identification of such issues is also easy for me.*" (Raj).
>
> "*In my research journey as a teacher, I came in contact with a higher professional community and could attain workshops and seminars which was beyond the teaching career as a teacher only.*" (Salu)

From the excerpts, it's obvious that the R & D project has turned out to be contributing as they got a professional community, explore their potential, and door to further learning is opened. From the interview experts it was found that research is helpful in the professional development of teachers as it bridges them to professionalism and learning is open for them. It has offered them many opportunities.

Doing research and involvement in professional communities helps teachers to grow professionally and offers them opportunities (Owen, 2015) and the study has also the same findings as most of the teachers opined that the R & D project allowed them to fit themselves in the professional community and could learn more and it is worth being in such communities. Farrell (2017) found that teachers get benefited when involved in research workshops, meetings, and professional circles and this study also aligns with their words as teachers experienced professional growth in R & D projects. This made them involved in meetings and workshops and offered various other opportunities to explore themselves.

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*Reflections*

Self-reflection on the practices they had was one of the major concerns raised by teachers that emerged due to their engagement in R&D activities**.**

*Self-reflection on practices*

While working in the groups involved in the project, the teachers had opportunities to self-reflect on the pedagogical practices they were undertaking for long in their professional careers. Roji, Mutu, Raj, and Salu's opinions illustrate this concern.

> "*I found it worth practicing. I got to learn about learning by doing. I explored, and I realized where I lacked and could find solutions. While doing research I was able to have flashbacks of my B.Ed. days and M.Ed. classes, indeed it is reawakening me.*" (Rosy)
>
> "*During the project, I sensed, realize and recall my practices and got through with some new practices. I could posit myself self-rating and I have my new positionality of teacher-researcher and have a deeper reflection of my inner me and could sense where I lacked and where I am aligned through this project right for proposals to final submission journey.*" (Mutu)
>
> "*Though it is helpful to us to improve our classroom practices and to reenergize us. I feel that it's time-consuming but useful this or that way. Not only academic excellence I deeply got to sense that research will pay for us in different ways even monetary gain. On the top, I realize and unlearn and relearn from this project in case of dealing with the cases and doing action research regarding topics of my interest and need.*" (Raj)
>
> "*I got to improve my teaching styles after doing research. I was able to apply the findings of my study in a real classroom setting as a pure researcher. I believe that is the*

*most demanding benefit I could ever get."* (Salu)

From the interview experts of Mutu and Raj, it is found that the research project they were involved in made them reflect as the study has traced out some reflections. Many participants have reported that they could reflect on their practices and rate themselves where they are and where they lacked in the research they carry out. This matches with the findings of Steeg (2016) and (Philpott & Oates, 2017) who opined that self-reflection opens the door to new. TPD is the tool for "equipping and enabling" teachers (Prabhu, 1987, as cited in Wajnryb, 2002, p. 12). Teachers were able to enable them as they reflect and adapt through research and have feelings of being enabled.

From the aforementioned interview excerpts, I found that teachers found the R & D tools as a means of reflective practice, a learning platform, and reflection and flashback of their college life and specialization. This concludes that research is helping teachers to reflect and adapt. Similarly, Rosy shared;

> "*I got to improve my teaching styles after doing research. I was able to apply the findings of my study in a real classroom setting as a pure researcher. I believe that is the most demanding benefit I could ever get.*" (Rosy)

While going through the data it is found that the research project is helping teachers find out solutions to their classroom issues and teachers are able to rethink and reflect and apply in their teaching. This strongly aligns with Stenhouse's (1975) framework which keeps the classroom as the center of study bringing out solutions related to teaching and students. As like Stenhouse 's remarks R & D projects also offered this sort of opportunity as of the participants' concerns and that is reflected even in the interview experts presented above.

Burden

When teachers were asked about the difficulties they met being involved in research, a few of them shared that they had to

do the research alongside their teaching load, which made them feel further burdened and it also created higher moral pressure for them as if they do not complete there will emerge a moral issue.

*Teaching load*

> "*It was quite challenging to finish the project as we were taking it with a normal teaching load. Beyond it, we were just exposed to it just after a few webinars. Doing it with lesser knowledge we struggled a lot.*" (Raj)

> "*I was under pressure. It was introduced at the last of the session. I am finished with hustles and bustles. Further, I found it as a tool of tension in the name of growth as of limited competence and resources in my access.*" (Salu)

Despite the positive responses toward professional growth, the study revealed some negative assumptions they had felt while being part of the project. Under this theme, the experiences of teachers align with those (Gjelaj et al,2020). Gjelaj found that teachers encountered difficulties in becoming researchers as they do have limited resources and research skills during their courses in universities, and applying them in the classroom was tough, under the research and development project in this study also teachers have opined that they took it as a burden. They felt the project was a burden as they had to do it in a rush as of the late announcement of the project by the administration. They were also not provided with resources and they lacked better ideas. They did it just to be away from criticism and obstacles in promotion tasks in the future

*b. Moral pressure*

Findings revealed that some participants were taking the project as moral pressure .in this regard Mutu asserted;

> "*I am taking it a bit differently. This project was introduced and launched unanimously and we did it. But the payment is done on an equal basis. So, in my case, I did meet the research ethics but some very raw research*

*also got the same recognition and payment. This forced*
*me to do it just for formality as no recognition is made of*
*high performers. So, professionally growing but no fair*
*competition. I am sensing it as a moral burden.*"
Just like Mutu, Shalu asserted;
*"I did it just to escape judgment though it is professional*
*strength. I believe I did this to be away from judgments.*
*We didn't get any supportive training and did sensing as*
*a burden and somehow, I did.*"

They did it just to be away from criticism and obstacles in promotion tasks in the future. Another concern was the teaching load. This finding has a similarity with Vasquez (2017), who believed teachers with higher loads do not perform quality work as they have no time for family and friends. The study finding aligns with him as they did it at random and without competencies with the fear of not being promoted and the pressure of not following the crowd. They don't know whether it helps them to grow professionally or not. Some of the participants opined that the training provided for action research was not enough and they couldn't understand the core principles of it but did it for doing purpose only. This goes with Matheson and Windle's (2017) ideas that the trainers and training and projects always do not meet the classroom issues and expectations of teachers and their needs and do not have successful ratings over the program. Like them, participants of this study also felt the same.

This finding also has a connection with Stenhouse's (1975) framework which also says teachers have to undergo some difficulties while incorporating classroom problems and that is also faced by teachers as they revealed sorrow of doing the project. Many participants revealed. From the findings, it is clear that teachers were finding it a burden in case of resources, competency, and recognition lapses. But experts revealed that their growth, professional enhancement,

reflection to realization, and adoption are notably welcoming things brought by the R & D project. The study has highlighted the more positive response to the research and one negative finding under theme burden as few participants did it but sensed it as an academic burden. This study has sampled only five participants and it's not possible to generalize the findings in other contexts other research with varied methodologies and participants is encouraged. This is an implication in our context and other nearing regions.

## Conclusion

The integration of research for academic growth in the world has been common as it's found to be crucial for teachers' rich professionalism and classroom improvement. This present study tried to unfold the narratives of teachers regarding support of R&D projects in their professional development embedding into four themes consisting of identity, opportunity, reflection, and burden with the narratives of five school teachers of public schools in Nepal run under educational trust. The study has revealed low dissatisfaction among teachers as they were not confident whether it supports their growth. Because of it, they took it as a burden practice.

The findings revealed some more positive support towards their professional development as they found it more beneficial for their growth. It advocates the necessity of research in teachers' growth and it is expected that it can be of higher value in the Nepalese context as research helps teachers grow professionally and derive good academic performance exploring classroom issues. They could reflect, learn and get the opportunity and can have a unique identity and can contribute to academia.

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# Impact of E-Pedagogy in English E-Class in Higher Education of Nepal

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Though the use of e-pedagogy in education has been advocated, it had not been well-practiced before the COVID-19 pandemic period in Nepalese education context. In this connection, this study aims to reflect the context and explore the use and impact of e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality with the practices of it by the university English teachers and students of Nepal during pandemic and post pandemic contexts. The mixed-method research design was used collecting data from an online survey questionnaire and internet based semi-structured interviews among the participants from the teachers (N=20) and students (N=80) of five universities for quantitative data and for qualitative data from two students and two teachers of two the universities of Nepal. The findings of the study revealed that on average, 23.6% of university teachers and students have a positive impact of e-pedagogy where KU followed by MU, TU, PU and FWU teachers and students were found to be using more often it in terms of joining e-class and using resources (30%), interaction (33%), regularity (31%), techno-based learning (average 21.2%:MU–28%), searching internet-based resources (TU–28%), attending online examinations (average 17.4%:KU-21%), participating online training/workshop/ conference (average 23.8%:KU–26%), and learner autonomy (average 15.4%:PU-19%) supported by the qualitative data. Furthermore, the use of e-pedagogy in ELT was found to be no longer being used regularly pandemic period onwards and suggested to be practiced as the regular part of

teaching and learning in a blended way. Overall, e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on teaching-learning in English e-class during the pandemic period.

**Keywords:** e-pedagogy, access, impact, online teaching-learning, ELT

## Context of the Study

Online education has been adopted widely to address the educational chaos created by the Covid-19 pandemic (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245). In the discourse of online based e-pedagogy, there are two basic online teaching modes: 'asynchronous' also called 'recorded' in which faculty prepares recorded contents in advance and students watch them online; and 'synchronous' also called 'live broadcasting' through which faculty teach as real-time interaction and communicate with students (Gautam & Gautam, 2021). In this regard, the teaching learning communities were found to be using both types of modes while using e-pedagogy in Nepal.

The education system faced a crisis with the spread of the coronavirus, with over 190 countries having gone through some form of school closures that has impacted more than 7 billion students (World Bank, 2020 as cited in Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022). According to the UNESCO (2020b), the number of students affected by school and university closures in 138 countries has nearly quadrupled to 1.37 billion, representing more than three out of four children and youth worldwide. In addition, nearly 60.2 million teachers were no longer in the classroom and more than 290 million students did not have access to education in physical classroom environments. Moreover, more than 220 million post-secondary students – 13 percent of the total number of students affected globally – had their studies ended or significantly disrupted due to COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020a).

In the context of Nepal, it was the education sector which suffered a lot by the pandemic, although almost all the sectors suffered during and after the pandemic. In the academic institutions, the conventional physical face to face classes were disrupted, exams were on hold and the teaching learning process became stand still due to the influx of the unprecedented virus (Gautam, 2020) in Nepal during the pandemic period. The on-class teaching-learning process was suspected from 23 March, 2020 by recommendation of the high-level COVID-19 prevention and control committee of the government of Nepal as the Ministry of Education in Nepal endorsed a guideline on 31st May 2020 to facilitate student learning through the alternative system (Ministry of Education, 2020). The conventional face-to-face mode of teaching learning was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Saud, 2021) with increasing lockdown tenure, academia through formal and informal forums, started a discussion to change the mode of classes and made few arrangement policies to cope with the crisis (Gautam, & Gautam, 2021, Khanal, 2020). Because of the sudden and unexpected situation, Nepal faced a considerable struck to face the challenges to carry on online education in terms of infrastructure, resources, and pedagogical perspective (Kunwar et al., 2020 as cited in Kunwar, Shrestha, & Phuyal, 2022) which has been proved as the opportunity think and move with the alternative way to regulate academia, teaching-learning activities ahead.

Moving from school education to distance learning (digital and non-digital) is a new and challenging experience. The extended period of school closures has accentuated the digital divide in schools and made it an educational divide. Families with better digital literacy can help their children, while children of digitally illiterate families are at risk of falling behind (Baiza 2020). In Nepalese higher education contexts, Nepal Open University (NOU) which used to have an online mode of teaching and learning from

its establishment has significantly promoted its technological competencies and running its regular program. Tribhuvan University (TU) and Kathmandu University (KU) had already established their own ODL programs and offered a few programs for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education and Social Sciences (Pangeni, 2016 as cited in Kunwar, Shrestha, & Phuyal, 2022, p. 13).

All Nepalese universities took initiatives to provide their students with learning opportunities through online teaching. In doing so, they prepared appropriate operational guidelines and manuals so that they could make transition to online teaching from face to face teaching (Kathmandu University, 2020; Mid-Western University, 2020; Tribhuvan University, 2020 as cited in Thapaliya, Adhikari, & Rana, 2023, p. 2). During the pandemic period to regulate the teaching learning activities, Mid-West University (MU) also prepared the guideline for regulating the online mode of teaching-learning and alternative mode of operating system and visualized the complete cycle of e-pedagogy with e-Admission, e-Class, e-Assessment, e-Examination, and e-Certification (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020). In this connection, Paudel (2021) further justifies Nepal Open University which used online mode of teaching and learning even before the pandemic. Other universities like TU, KU, PU, MU, and FWU and almost all the schools and colleges practiced online teaching and learning. These universities did not have their own online learning 'platform' generally called 'learning management system' (LMS) because they were built for on-class practices, having no infrastructure and preparedness for online classes. Faculties and students were not mentally and technically prepared for online mode of teaching (Gautam & Gautam, 2021).

During the pandemic period, the academic community advocated and used e-pedagogy as the alternative approach of deregulating the forcefully postponed conventional face-to-face physical classes. The university and school level teachers started

to empower themselves by searching the alternative way. In fact it is easier to advocate in favor of using e-pedagogy rather than using it in a real situation. Therefore, most of the teaching-learning community members started to empower each other by organizing online workshops, seminars, conferences etc. via synchronous and asynchronous mode of dissemination. It was a kind of fun and compulsion among the teaching-learning community to learn and implement e-pedagogy related soft-skills and strategies of using them while teaching. Both the teachers and students including the educational administrative staff, guardians, and other stakeholders were directly and indirectly benefited by the use of e-pedagogy in terms of developing ICT literacy and use for teaching learning purposes. Although the conventional face-to-face mode of teaching and learning restarted after the lockdown over, the use of e-pedagogy is no longer found to be used as the regular routine; however, to extend it has been being used in academic contexts. In this context, it's worth exploring the use of e-pedagogy during and post pandemic situations especially among the ELT professionals and practitioners in higher education institutions of Nepal.

**Literature Review**

The use of e-Pedagogy in education is the most advocated discourse in academia. In the pedagogical practice, e-pedagogy is an e-learning pedagogy (Mehanna, 2004) and understood as a branch of pedagogy (Baldiņš, 2016) which utilize the digital information and communication technologies (Wee Hin, & Subramaniam, 2009) for teaching and learning strategies via the use of internet (Swartz, Cole, & Shelley, 2009) developed specifically for online and/or blended environments (Salmons & Wilson, 2009). It accommodates methods, forms and resources of learning in relation to distance learning technologies (Syed, 2009; Tomei, 2013) adapting pedagogical and andragogical approaches to learning process (Wang, Farmer, Parker,

& Golubski, 2012) and assessing learning performance in e-learning (McKay, 2013). However, it has not been used so massively before the worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic as all the educational institutions were closed and the conventional physical face-to face mode of pedagogy was almost useless, as a result, the online and alternative mode of pedagogy emerged in practice as a regular part of teaching, learning and evaluation in education.

In the context of Nepalese university teachers' practices of e-pedagogy, Adhikari and Rana (2022) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has become an opportunity for lecturers and higher education institutions to shift from traditional pedagogies to ICT-integrated learning. Moreover, the findings suggest that if invested in infrastructure development and lecturers' professional development, the universities can gradually adopt online learning as an alternative mode of learning to provide equal access to quality education for all (ibid). Critically arguing the practices of use of e-pedagogy, Thapaliya, Adhikari, and Rana (2023) claimed that the implementations of online teaching and learning to manage students' learning loss during the COVID-19 were marred by paradoxical policy, insufficient resources, teachers' attitudes, socio-psychological issues, the lack of trained teachers and connection among technology, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Interestingly, they further supported the use of e-pedagogy that the teachers have taken the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for learning to use technologies in their teaching and learning activities.

Online education was found to be beneficial primarily for promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community and getting huge and authentic resource of knowledge (Paudel, 2021), however, the time-management skills, more freedom to the teachers and learners, and reliable internet at workplace as the extreme challenges the school and university closures had a negative impact on students' knowledge and skills development in

Nepal (Dawadi, Giri, & Simkhada, 2020), however, pedagogical change during the crisis of COVID-19 made the students' learning meaningful, interactive and productive (Adhikari, 2021). In this context, Dawadi, Giri, and Simkhada (2020) claimed that the pandemic has had serious impacts on students' learning and well-being, and that it potentially widens the gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children in their equitable access to quality education (p. 1).

In relation to the factors affecting access of e-pedagogy during pandemic period, Gautam and Gautam (2021) explored the triplet factors: infrastructure, student and teacher as antecedents of effectiveness of online classes during a pandemic. Technological support, infrastructure availability, faculty and students' perception have a significant relationship for the effectiveness of the online mode of the teaching-learning process. Students faced anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, but a higher willingness to learn reduces the level of anxiety. Regarding the impacts of online and alternative modes of teaching and learning in higher education in Nepal, Kunwar, Shrestha, and Phuyal (2022) found that the major impacts due to force paradigm shift to online mode are access to quality education, social inequalities, technology adoption, and emotional wellbeing; accelerate change, high dropout, and laboratory work and assessment. Likewise, it has been argued that despite a number of challenges and crises, teachers, however, learn to deal with the technological challenges and manage to run the class through virtual mode. Nevertheless, they assess that online delivery is not effective due to the various constraints (Khanal, 2020).

Reflecting the university teachers' practices and impact of online teaching learning process, Adhikari and Rana (2022) claim that after creating an "online group forums and engaged students in collaborative learning activities, … [it] resulted in students' off-class communications and increased their learning autonomy

in onlines classes" (p. 141). The major challenges and constraints they experience in transitioning to online education include poor network, lack of digital skills, and lack of technological support from institutions among others (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245). The study regarding school level English teachers' perception towards online teaching readiness by Saud (2021) found that the majority of the school level English teachers had prepared themselves for online instruction with necessary technological skills. Likewise, Adhikari (2021) found that the students struggle with limited access to digital technology to manage their online learning.

Regarding the perception and practices of online and alternative mode of examination, Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, and Bhatta (2020) claimed that teachers and students were highly motivated and interested to participate in the online and alternative examination system. They used messenger and email for sending and receiving the questions and answer copies via the online and alternative mode of examination. However, they faced the challenges of internet access, electricity problems, and lack of training and skills to handle the technology. Likewise, Neupane (2021) found that the majority of the students found online learning supportive during the pandemic and they preferred the continuity of online learning even after the Covid-19 pandemic related to technology, pedagogical skills, and the socio-economic status of the students. Regarding the use of online platforms while using e-pedagogy it has been found that because of having no institutional LMS, almost all academic institutes are using commercial platforms like Google, Microsoft, Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, YouTube, Skype, Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp, etc. to continue the teaching and learning process instead of face-to face conventional pedagogical practices (Kunwar, Shrestha, and Phuyal, 2022; Adhikari & Rana, 2022; -; Adhikari, 2021; Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020) during pandemic period as the medium of e-pedagogy. In this regard, from the review of the related literature,

it is found that many researches being conducted in uni-institutional setting, uni-nature participants and uni-dimensional themes in nature; in contrast, this study tries to explore the practices and perceptions of both the English teachers and students representing from five universities of Nepal regarding the access and quality of using e-pedagogy during and after the pandemic period in Nepalese ELT contexts.

## Objective of the Study

The study aims to reflect and explore the overall situation of access, quality and impacts of using e-pedagogy in ELT e-class in terms of joining e-class and using resources, interaction among the teachers and students, regularity in e-class, techno-based learning opportunity, searching internet-based resources, attending online examinations, participating online training / workshop / conference, and developing learner autonomy in the context of higher education of Nepal.

## Methodology of the study

The mix-method research design was used collecting the data from internet based quantitative data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The total participants were 100 (20 – university teachers and 80 –university students) from five universities of Nepal (Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Mid-West University, Pokhara University and Far-Western University) using purposive sampling strategies based on the principle of accessibility and availability of the participants. Furthermore, the quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive statistical tools (percentage) and the qualitative data using narrative description to find the objectives of the research.

## Result Analysis and Interpretation

The quantitative data analysis reveals differences in the perception and practice of university teachers and students regarding

e-pedagogy in English classes across various universities in Nepal. The data highlights five key aspects: joining online classes, interacting between teachers and students, using online and offline resource materials, evaluating learning, and regularity in attending e-classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the access and quality of using e-pedagogy in English e-class, the responses of the respondents are presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:



*University-wise English teachers' and students' perception towards practice of e-pedagogy in English e-class (%)*
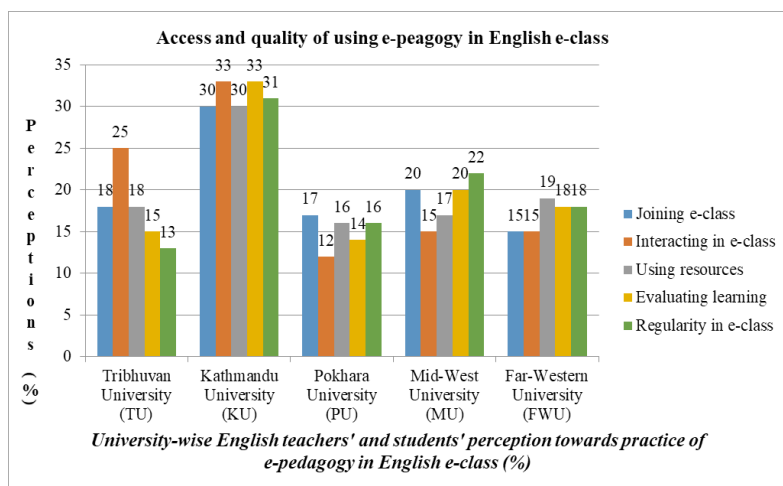
Based on the quantitative data analysis, it can be observed that there are differences in the perception and practice of university teachers and students towards e-pedagogy in English class across different universities in Nepal. Regarding joining the online class, Kathmandu University (KU) has the highest percentage (30%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can access the online class effectively, followed by Tribhuvan University (TU) at 18%. The lowest percentage is reported by Far-Western University (FWU) at 15%. In terms of interacting between teachers and students in the online class, KU also has the highest percentage (33%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively interact with each other, followed by TU at 25%. The lowest percentage is reported by PU at 12%.

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Regarding the use of online resource materials, KU has the highest percentage (30%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively utilize these resources, followed by TU and PU at 18% and 16% respectively. The lowest percentage is reported by FWU at 19%. In terms of evaluating learning in the online class, KU has the highest percentage (33%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively evaluate their learning, followed by MU at 20%. The lowest percentage is reported by TU and FWU at 15% and 18% respectively.

Regarding the regularity of attending e-classes, KU has the highest percentage (31%) of teachers and students who perceive that they attend e-classes regularly, followed by MU at 22%. The lowest percentage is reported by TU at 13%. Overall, the data suggest that KU generally has the highest perception and practice towards e-pedagogy in English class, while FWU has the lowest. However, it is important to note that all universities have room for improvement in certain areas.

Regarding the impacts in terms of access and quality of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, one of the graduate level major English students of MU shared his experience related to joining the online class, using reading materials and classroom interaction with the teachers and students as,

> *"...I really enjoyed the online class during COVID-19 period when our campus was closed. I learnt how to use zoom to join the class where we hardly get connected due to poor internet connectivity and frequent power-cut. Our teachers used to present power-point slides and shared the photos of his notes in the Facebook messenger group. He used to ask us to search the reading materials in Google. Sometimes he used to divide the breakout rooms and asked us to discuss and that was a new experience for me."*

Regarding the access and quality of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, one of the English professors of Tribhuvan University shared his experience of teaching English via online class as,
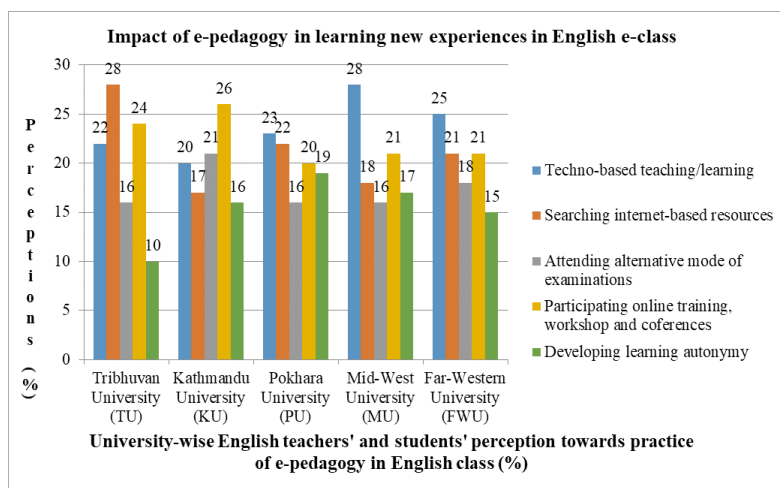
> "...My notes became useless for the first time. I used to teach by providing the notes to the students but due to COVID-19, the physical class was postponed as a result we were unsure what to do ahead. Later we were trained to teach online class using 'Microsoft Teams'. At first it was so difficult to join in the training in 'Teams' later learnt to teach via 'Teams' that the campus administration supported. Making familiar with the technology, connecting the students in 'Teams', being disconnected time and again due to connectivity problems were the challenges, however, it changed my entire teaching methodology from notes to preparing power-point slides and providing internet-based reference materials to read."

Regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, an English major graduate student from MU shared his experience during the COVID-19 period when the campus was closed. Despite facing challenges with poor internet connectivity and frequent power cuts, he enjoyed the online classes and learned to use Zoom to join the sessions. The teachers presented PowerPoint slides and shared notes' photos on the Facebook messenger group. The student appreciated the new experience of breakout room discussions and being asked to search for reading materials online.

On the other hand, an English professor from Tribhuvan University shared his experience of shifting to online teaching during the pandemic. Initially, he faced difficulties with technology, but with training in using 'Microsoft Teams', he adapted his teaching methodology from providing physical notes to preparing PowerPoint slides and offering internet-based reference materials for students to read.

The qualitative data analysis highlighted that despite challenges faced by both teachers and students in e-pedagogy during the pandemic, they gained valuable learning experiences in terms of teaching, interacting, resourcing, and evaluating. The MU student enjoyed the online classes and improved his technological skills, while the Tribhuvan University professor adapted his teaching methods to suit the online environment.

The result of the quantitative data analysis towards the perceptions and practice of university teachers and students regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences in e-class during COVID-19 pandemic are discussed as follows:

**Impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences in English e-class**

University-wise English teachers' and students' perception towards practice of e-pedagogy in English class (%)

- Techno-based teaching/learning
- Searching internet-based resources
- Attending alternative mode of examinations
- Participating online training, workshop and coferences
- Developing learning autonymy

Based on the quantitative data analysis, the impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences in the e-class during COVID-19 pandemic is relatively positive for university teachers and students. On average, 23.6% of university teachers and students from the five universities reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class. This suggests that

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e-pedagogy has provided a viable alternative for university education during the pandemic.

When it comes to techno-based learning, Mid-West University had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (28%), followed by Far-Western University (25%) and Pokhara University (23%). Kathmandu University had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (20%). The data also shows that a significant proportion of university teachers and students (on average 21.2%) reported that they have been able to search internet-based resources to enhance their learning experiences during the pandemic. In terms of searching internet-based resources, TU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (28%), followed by PU (22%) and FWU (21%). MU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (18%). This highlights the importance of digital literacy skills in today's education landscape.

Another positive impact of e-pedagogy is that it has enabled university teachers and students to attend online and alternative modes of examinations (on average 17.4%). To be more specific, KU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (21%), followed by FWU (18%) and TU (16%). PU and MU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (16%). This has helped to ensure academic continuity during the pandemic while adhering to social distancing guidelines. E-pedagogy has also provided university teachers and students with the opportunity to participate in online training, workshops, and conferences (on average 23.8%). With regards to participating in online training, workshop, and conference, KU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (26%), followed by TU (24%) and PU (20%). FWU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (15%). This has enabled them to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Finally, e-pedagogy has contributed to the development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students (on average 15.4%). TU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (10%), followed by KU (16%) and MU (17%). PU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (19%). This means that they have been able to take more control over their learning processes and pace.

The quantitative data analysis reveals several positive impacts of e-pedagogy on university teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings show that a substantial proportion of respondents experienced positive outcomes in terms of techno-based learning, accessing internet-based resources, participating in online examinations, attending virtual training and conferences, and developing learning autonomy. Overall, the results suggest that e-pedagogy has been instrumental in ensuring academic continuity and providing new learning experiences for both teachers and students during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the importance of digital literacy skills and the potential for online education to complement traditional classroom teaching, providing additional learning opportunities and flexibility.

Regarding participation in both internal and external e-examinations for the first time, another undergraduate student of MU shared as,

> *"...I submitted internal evaluation assignments and mid-term exam questions by writing at home to the email of the teachers. Even the final examination was held online. For the first time I wrote the answers of the questions where we used to receive the questions in our email just before the exam time started and we had to solve them, scan them via android mobile and send to the same email which was a very new experience during COVID period. Now, there are no online classes; just physical classes."*

Reflecting the experience of organizing and participating virtual trainings, workshops and conferences, another English professor said,

> "...I am a life member of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association. NELTA center, provincial and branch committee organized many virtual trainings, workshops, and conferences and I participated and presented my experience of teaching e-pedagogy. I encouraged my students to participate in such programs and I found them very useful for professionalism in terms of content and pedagogy in ELT. The ODL division of TU has also provided us with skill and strategy-based ICT and pedagogy-related training which was very useful while teaching online class."

Based on the quantitative data and experiences shared, it is clear that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on online based e-pedagogy in ELT e-class during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of internet-based resources, alternative modes of examinations, and online training, workshops, and conferences have enabled university teachers and students to continue learning and developing their knowledge and skills.

Additionally, e-pedagogy has contributed to the development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students, allowing them to take more control over their learning processes and pace. The experiences shared by the undergraduate student from MU and the English professor highlight the practical benefits of e-pedagogy. The ability to submit assignments and exams electronically, attend virtual conferences and training sessions, and access online resources has expanded the opportunities for learning and professional development beyond the traditional classroom setting. It is clear that e-pedagogy has become an important component of modern education and will continue to play a significant role in the future.

**Findings**

The teaching-learning and evaluation system in education and in ELT in particular has been continuously being updated due to the impact of the increasing use of ICT and globalization (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka & Bhatta, 2020). The trend and techniques of using technology in teaching, learning and evaluation procedures transformed the conventional pedagogy into the new paradigm shift towards practicing e-pedagogy. Although the practice of e-pedagogy in ELT is not new concept, it was not fully practiced as the regular part of their pedagogy before the COVID-19 pandemic period in the context of higher education; from the research it was found almost all the universities of Nepal mandatorily implemented as their regular part of teaching, learning, and evaluating in almost all the academic programs.

Among the English teachers and students of five universities, Kathmandu University (KU) English teachers and students were found to be using effective e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality such as joining e-class and using online resources (30%), interaction among teachers and students and (33%) regularity of attending e-classes (31%) followed by MU, TU, PU and FWU respectively. Likewise, regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in ELT, on average, 23.6% of university teachers and students from the five universities reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class.

From the quantitative data results it was found that the impact of e-pedagogy in terms of techno-based learning (average 21.2%: MU – 28%); searching internet-based resources (TU – 28%); attend online and alternative modes of examinations (on average 17.4%: KU-21%); opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference (on average 23.8%: KU – 26%); and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students (on average 15.4%: PU-19%) which were also supported

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by the qualitative data analysis as well. Furthermore, it was also found that all of the university teachers and students are no more using online e-pedagogy at graduate and undergraduate levels after the pandemic is over; however, it has been frequently being used at M.Phil./PhD. level teaching-learning procedures. It is worth recommending to continue using e-pedagogy along with the physical face-to-face classes as the blended mode of pedagogy in ELT.

The findings suggest that Kathmandu University (KU) was the most effective in using e-pedagogy, with its English teachers and students demonstrating high levels of access and quality, interaction, and regularity of attendance in e-classes. Additionally, there were reported positive impacts of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences, techno-based learning, searching internet-based resources, attending online and alternative modes of examinations, opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference, and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students. It's worth noting that after the pandemic is over, all university teachers and students are no longer using online e-pedagogy at graduate and undergraduate levels, but it's being frequently used at M.Phil./PhD. level teaching-learning procedures. However, it's recommended to continue using e-pedagogy along with the physical face-to-face classes as a blended mode of pedagogy in ELT.

The study also suggests that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on the learning experiences of university teachers and students during the pandemic. It's worth noting that while there are differences in the percentages across the universities, the overall pattern suggests that university teachers and students have found e-pedagogy to be beneficial for learning new experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, these findings highlight the potential benefits of incorporating e-pedagogy in ELT, and it's important to continue

exploring and implementing technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices to improve educational outcomes in general and ELT in particular.

## Discussion

Using e-Pedagogy during pandemic situation was a compulsion rather than a choice and interest for the teaching-learning community. Since the pedagogical processes are for achieving the goals of teaching and learning, the teachers and learners are the real actors to make it happen. In this context, the main issues to be discussed are whether the goals of using e-pedagogical practices were accessible and useful for target community or not and how effectively and efficiently they worked in its true spirit of using them. Regarding the situation, opportunities and challenges of online-based e-class, the previous studies identified as poor network, lack of digital skills, lack of technological support from institutions among others (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245); the lack of electricity, no access to the internet, and poor connectivity as well as the lack of training and skills to use the technology etc. (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020). However, both the teachers and students were found to have taken as the opportunity to practice e-pedagogy in e-classes. In this regard, Thapaliya, Adhikari and Rana (2023) further support from their research findings that the teachers have taken the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for learning to use technologies in their teaching and learning activities, though they were marred by paradoxical policy, insufficient resources, teachers' attitudes, socio-psychological issues, the lack of trained teachers and connection among technology, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. In the same vain, Khanal (2020) also suggests for ensuring the access of ICT resources and facilities to both teachers and students, sufficient training to the both groups and digitalize curricular materials for the effective implementation of

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virtual learning (p. 89). The findings of situation, access, quality of practicing e-pedagogy in English e-class were also found to be the similar in nature.

It is the ground reality that the teachers and students were forced to shift the conventional teaching-learning pedagogies to the techno-based e-pedagogy as the new practice. During the pandemic period, the students were found to be searching the reading materials in the internet based websites which reduced the students' dependency on teachers' notes and handouts. Moreover, it has enhanced the online based research and use of online based resources. As Paudel (2021) claimed that the participants experienced online education beneficial primarily for promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community and getting a huge and authentic resource of knowledge. Furthermore, the teachers and students were found to be discussing group work and pair work activities even in the e-class creating break-out rooms. In this regard, Adhikari and Rana (2022) claim that lecturers' practice of online learning has changed their traditional beliefs about face-to-face teaching practices. It reflects that it is possible to make e-class more interactive and student centered e-pedagogy in EFL e-class.

It was a quite new and surprising experience for both the students and teachers to attend the online examination not only for the internal evaluation but also for the external evaluation purpose as well. Based on the research regarding perceptions and practices of online and alternative mode of examinations of MU, Khadka, Rokaya, Roka and Bhatta (2020) found that teachers and students were found to be highly motivated and interested to participate in the online and alternative examination system. Majority of them had access to messenger and email for sending and receiving the questions and answer copies via the online and alternative mode of examinations (p. 113).

Moreover, the majority of the teachers and students from

all the universities were found to be attending online training, workshops, seminars, and conferences for their professional development and to learn new skills and strategies related to use of e-pedagogy. In this connection, Khanal (2020) claimed that despite a number of challenges and crises, teachers, however, learn to deal with the technological challenges and manage to run the class through virtual mode. Moreover, Adhikari and Rana (2022) support the research findings that online workshops and webinars enabled them to identify and use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for online teaching in pandemic lockdowns. To be more specific, English teachers in Nepal attended three kinds of events that include training programs to learn technology, events to learn about the online resources for English language teaching and professional development events to enhance their professional skills (Gautam, 2020). Nevertheless, the practice of e-pedagogy has found to be no longer continued after the COVID-19 pandemic ended as the physical classes restarted as usual.

Overall, the shift towards e-pedagogy during the pandemic was a necessary and compelling change for both teachers and students, who had to adapt to new methods of teaching and learning. Despite the challenges faced, including issues with technology, connectivity, and training, many teachers and students were able to see the benefits of e-pedagogy, including increased access to online resources, greater opportunities for collaboration, and the ability to participate in online training and professional development opportunities. However, it remains to be seen whether these changes will be sustained once the pandemic is over and physical classes resume. Regardless, the experience of e-pedagogy during the pandemic has provided valuable insights into the potential of technology to support teaching and learning, and may serve as a catalyst for future innovations in education.

## Conclusion

The paradigm shift in teaching-learning and evaluation system from the conventional face-to-face physical class into online based e-class with practicing e-pedagogy is key achievement of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period. Although use of e-pedagogy in ELT is not a new concept, it has not been fully used before. The teaching-learning community fully enjoyed using it during this period globally and locally as there was no option remaining. In this context, this study reflects the scenario of using e-pedagogy with the opportunities and challenges that the English teachers and students faced in ELT e-class. It also depicts university-wise perceptions and practices of English teachers and students towards using e-pedagogy in terms of access and impacts in various dimensions perspectives such as joining e-class, interaction among the teachers and students, using and searching online resources, technology-based teaching and learning experiences, regularity in e-class, attending in e-examinations, e-trainings, e-workshops and e-conferences as a part of e-pedagogy.

Among the five universities, Kathmandu university English teachers and students were found to be using e-pedagogy more often followed by TU, MU, FWU, and PU. Moreover, they had amazing experiences in terms of teaching and learning procedures in e-class during the lockdown period. In addition, after the lockdown was over, they restarted their physical face-to-face mode of teaching-learning activities as usual and no online-based e-pedagogy is in practice in almost all the universities of Nepal in case of teaching English at graduate and undergraduate levels except M.Phil./PhD. classes. This indicates that the online based e-pedagogy has not still received its identity as the regular part of teaching, learning and evaluation in Nepal, although both the teachers and students are interested to continue it. In the post-pandemic period in a new normal context, the conventional face-to-face physical classes are renewing their lost identity during the

pandemic period and teaching learning communities are enjoying it. So, it is worth recommending continuing the blended mode of pedagogy with the fusion of face-to-face mode of conventional pedagogy and online-based e-pedagogy in education in general and ELT in particular in the contexts of higher education of Nepal.

Overall, this study highlights the practices and impacts of e-pedagogy in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal's higher education system during the pandemic period and onwards. The study found that e-pedagogy has transformed the conventional pedagogy into a new paradigm shift towards practicing e-pedagogy. It also found that almost all universities in Nepal have mandatorily implemented e-pedagogy as their regular part of teaching, learning, and evaluation in almost all academic programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study shows that Kathmandu University (KU) English teachers and students were found to be using effective e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality. They reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class. The impact of e-pedagogy was also found in terms of techno-based learning, searching internet-based resources, attending online and alternative modes of examinations, opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference, and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students.

The study recommends that e-pedagogy should be continued along with physical face-to-face classes as a blended mode of pedagogy in ELT. The overall pattern suggests that university teachers and students have found e-pedagogy to be beneficial for learning new experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's worth noting that while there are differences in the percentages across the universities, the study suggests that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on the learning experiences of university teachers and students during the pandemic.

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# Role of Emotional Intelligence on Retaining Faculty Members at Higher Educational Institutions: A Phenomenological Analysis of Selected Business Schools

Mitra Bandhu Poudel, PhD

Competent faculty retention in any academic institution requires its leaders to have adequate competencies of emotional intelligence. The purpose of this study, hence, has been to examine the importance of emotional intelligence in faculty retention in higher educational institutions in Nepal. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was used to achieve the purpose of this study. In this context, eleven faculty members shared their experiences highlighting the value of emotional intelligence in their work environment. Transcription of interviews and focus group discussions were used as primary sources of data collection. Five themes and sixteen sub-themes revealed that competency factors of emotional intelligence such as empathy, self-control, and inspirational leadership, conflict management, delivering services, effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration have profound roles in retaining faculty at the academic institution. According to the description of the participants, organizational policies, leadership behavior, and motivational factors also play important roles in retaining the faculty. Furthermore, it was revealed that sports, pairing protocol, spacing effect, and environmental enrichment initiatives would also enhance faculty retention from a brain science perspective. As a result, leaders who want to retain their employees for a longer period need to portray emotional intelligence at their workplace. This research, therefore, serves as a guideline for

leaders at selected business schools to connect towards all ongoing debates that contribute to the body of literature as a new area of emotional intelligence in faculty retention.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, higher educational institution, faculty, retention

## Introduction

This study has included the issues such as the general perception of emotional intelligence (EI) and faculty retention at higher educational institutions, the various dimension of EI, the role of EI on retention, the effects of EI of leaders on subordinates at Academic Institutions, and leadership competencies on organizational commitment at Academic Institutions.

The theoretical concepts of emotional intelligence grounded in this study is primarily based on the Goleman model. In addition to this, the Salovey-Mayor model, and the Bar-On model are also explored to find the link from participants' perception. Goleman's model set out a framework of Emotional Intelligence (EI) that describes how people arrange themselves through personal competence and how they handle relationships through social competence (Goleman, 1998). Salovey and Mayer (1990) in their model argued that "intelligence is the capacity to bring about abstract reasoning to understand meanings, grapple the similarities and differences between two concepts, formulate powerful generalization and understand once generalization may be inappropriate due to circumstances" (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016, p.1). The Bar-On model is operationalized by the Emotional Quotient Inventory (The EQ-i). This model, according to Bar-On (2006), set out five scales: i. Intrapersonal (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization), ii. Interpersonal (empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship), iii. Stress

management (stress tolerance, impulse control) iv. Adaptabilities (reality testing, flexibility, problem-solving), and v. General mood (optimism, happiness).

Similarly, to examine the link between satisfaction and retention, Herzberg's theory of motivation has also been grounded. Previous studies (Homberg, Carthy & Tabvuma, 2015; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2015; Hom, Shaw & Hausknecht, 2017) suggest that employee motivation plays significant roles to enhance job satisfaction. Oladapo (2014) believes that encouraged and motivated employees by the management are more likely to stay. This shows that retention is linked to motivated and incentivized personnel (Dresner, DeRivera, Fuccillo & Heejun, 2014). Singh (2018) argues that appreciated employees are more than likely to stay with the organization because of the motivation which eventually will reduce the turnover rate. Further, the views of the participants in this study determine whether the relationship between EI and Job Satisfaction has been examined and found any links with scholar's views.

## Problem Statement

Goleman (2013) states that due to the changes in the rule of work, people are being evaluated by their competencies of handling work with each other along with training, expertise and smartness. This will eventually assist to identify and determine who will be recruited and who will not, who will let go and who will be retained, who passed over and who will be promoted (Goleman, 2013). "Initiatives, empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness in personal characteristics are important for employees in addition to intellectual capability and technical know-how to do the job" (Goleman, 2013, p.3). This demands the value of the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee engagement.

Retaining a talented workforce is a challenging job in organizations (Sivakumar & Chitra, 2018). Employees who are

satisfied with their job tend to stay. In contrast, those dissatisfied employees often look for a new position (Jacobs, 2011). Previous studies (Carmeli, 2003; Kafetsios & Loumakou, 2007; Al-Bahrani, 2017) examined the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. Experienced managers with EI skills reported an increased level of motivation, job satisfaction and performance, whereas managers with lack of EI skills reported a decreased level of motivation, job satisfaction and performance (Al-Bahrani, 2017).

The leader's EI has a significantly moderate and positive impact on the retention intention of their direct reports (Fernando & Gomage, 2019). Furthermore, EI of the employee can be used as a way to retain them, meaning there is the relationship between EI and the employee retention (Judeh, 2013; Sivakumar & Chitra, 2018; Fernando & Gomage, 2019).

Giao et al. (2020) revealed that perceived organizational support could decrease the turnover intention of employees and it could moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict. Owing to the value of EI on employee retention, a study is needed that explores the perception of academic professionals working in business schools in Nepal regarding the value of EI on employee retention. This research tried to provide the answers to the link between emotional intelligence and employee's retention at an academic institution.

**Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to identify the effect of emotional intelligence of leaders at Academic Institutions on faculty members' retention through their lived experiences. Specifically, the purpose presented here is to understand how social competencies help to manage faculty retention in Academic Institutions in Nepal.

According to previous studies, emotional intelligence is an

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important component of employee performance (Laxmi & Rao, 2018) and organizational commitment (Masrek, Osman, Ibrahim & Mansor, 2014). There are a few previous studies (Fernando & Gamage, 2019; Sivakumar & Chitra, 2018) on EI and employee retention. This study relies on personal experience of participants to understand the role of EI and how the effects of EI on Business faculty influence retention of employees within business schools in Nepal.

**Significance of the Study**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been a widely researched topic for twenty-five years after its introduction and is still an evolving issue (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016) despite numerous research articles having been authored. In this regard, this study has aimed to explore the perception of participants on emotional intelligence and the roles it plays in employee retention. . Goleman (2013) states that when organizations lose many employees, the real cost can be substantial. He further states, "The cost for a company to replace a derailed executive with someone from outside can run into hundreds of thousands, even millions, of dollars" (Goleman, 2013, p. 39). This signifies that there is a clear value-added from emotional competence, which deficit carries an expensive price- in turnover (Goleman, 2013). At a global consumer beverage firm, which ignored emotional intelligence, used to hire top-notch leaders, 50 percent left within two years at a total search cost of close to USD 4 million (Goleman, 2013). When the firm started to evaluate the emotional competencies, Goleman (2013) confirms that the retention rate was much greater, with only six per cent of new division Presidents leaving within two years.

There are about ten Universities running management/ business degrees for various levels in Nepal with 4500 to 5000

faculty members engaged in teaching in these business schools at various levels in Nepal as claimed by Nobel Management Research and Consulting Services (NMRCS). In this context, the researcher believes that this study could support the academic institution in Nepal for the need to evaluate the emotional competencies of the employee for retention. From Nepali perspective, the study on the role of EI on employee retention seemed to be a new one in terms of both quantitative and qualitative approach.

Besides, the contribution of this research will help the academic leaders to retain employees by understanding how emotional intelligence could be perceived to link with their views. The result of this study will serve as a valuable contribution to contemporary knowledge in emotional intelligence and employee retention. The researcher believes this is going to serve as a pioneering academic contribution in Nepal.

**Research Design**

This is a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a strategy of inquiry where the researcher identifies the essence of human experience about certain phenomena as described by participants (Creswell, 2007). There are several methods of data collection in a phenomenological study. However, the most practiced technique used interviews and focus groups discussion (Gill & Baillie, 2018). Creswell (2007) suggests five to twenty-five respondents for phenomenological studies. Morse (1994) suggests at least six in a phenomenological study. For this study, the researcher has used one on one virtual interview followed by a focus group discussion. The total sample comprises 11 face to face in-depth interviews.

The researcher has used a purposeful sampling method to determine the participants. The participants have been targeted for an in-depth interview with one session of 30-45 minutes. Similarly,

the focus group discussion (FGD) was scheduled to hold once for an hour and a half. They are the same participants in the interview and FGD. The researcher believes that individual experiences obtained from the interview are common issues as well as variations on the views derived from FGD. The in-depth interviews scheduled to use the semi-structured type of interviewing and employed an open-ended questionnaire. The flexibility that has been achieved by probing responses to questions posed by the researcher so other important information could be collected. Through these two methods (Interview and FGD), a coherence justification for themes has been built.
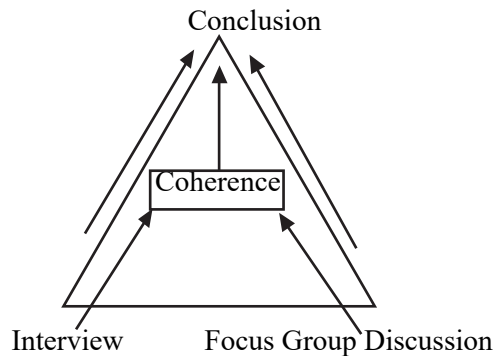


Figure 1: Methodological Triangulation (Poudel, 2020)

Triangulation was used for cross-checking to confirm data consistency by using more than one research method. Moreover, in line with the experts' view, triangulation or multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used, which strengthened reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Review of Literature**

First, all literature reviews of major theories of EI have been discussed. There are three major models of EI. They are; Goleman's model, Ability model and Bar-on model (Krishnan & Awang, 2020).

Second, the literature related to the role of EI in employee retention have also been reviewed. This review of literature has further explained the role of EI on employee retention in Nepali Business Schools.

**Theoretical Orientation**

Three major theories of Emotional Intelligence namely, Goleman's model, Ability model and the Bar-On model have been discussed in this section. In addition to this, a relevant literature on employee retention in Chinese Context in general but Nepali perspective in particular has also been reviewed. Finally, some important literature on emotional intelligence and employee retention have been stated in theoretical orientation.

**Major Theories of Emotional Intelligence**

Krishnan and Awang (2020) state that emotional intelligence originated from social intelligence which was introduced by Edward L Thorndike in 1920. Prior to this, Darwin's early work on emotional expression for survival and adaptation, according to Bar-On (2006) can be taken as the theoretical foundation of emotional intelligence. Further, Wechsler's intelligent behavior advocated on non-intellective abilities more than intellectual ability (Krishnan & Awang, 2020). In the year 1983, Howard Gardner came up with the idea of multiple intelligence (Moran & Gardner, 2018). In a memoir, entitled 'A Synthesizing Mind: A Memoir from the Creator of Multiple Intelligence Theory, Gardner (2020) asserts that Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory is based on empirical findings. MI consists of linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and personal intelligence. The model of emotional intelligence which is known as the ability model was developed by John Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990 (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016). With this model,

the authors claimed that some people might be more intelligent about emotions than others based on the findings in the area of emotion, intelligence, psychotherapy and cognition (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016). The Goleman's (1995) model which euphemistically is known as the mixed model of EI consists of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management in its framework (Lewis, Neville & Ashkanasy, 2017). Last but not the least, the Bar-On's (1997) mixed model of EI assimilates ability and trait disposition. It has five scales: intra-personal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood (Bar-On, 2006; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). The three models (Goleman, Ability and Bar-On) may offer some variances on measuring, recognizing and defining the EI components. Nevertheless, "the shared relationship among them is the capacity to identify and understand emotions and develop the necessary competencies to respond to those emotions in oneself and others" (Ramirez, Gudi, Griffin & Sherbert, 2016, p.61).

Goleman's model of emotional intelligence

Goleman (1998) set out a framework of emotional intelligence in his book entitled "Working with emotional intelligence" that describes how we arrange ourselves through personal competence and how we handle relationships through social competence. Personal competence, as Goleman (1998) describes in three competences: self-awareness, self- regulation and motivation. There are twelve competencies under personal competence. They are: emotional awareness, accurate self- assessment, self-confidence, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, innovation, achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism. Precisely, the EI model of Goleman (1998) includes three competences: (1) Self-Awareness-knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions; (2) Self-Regulation- managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources; (3) Motivation-Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals.

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**Ability model of emotional intelligence**

Ability model of emotional intelligence was introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in 1990. Salovey and Mayer (1990) define EI as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Mayer, DiPaolo and Salovey (1990), defined EI and developed a theory and demonstration measure of it. The authors identified and compared several models claiming that they introduced a regulatory model that they argued may be both intelligent and adaptive (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Series of studies have been conducted by the scholars on ability model (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2005; Salovey, Bracket, & Mayer, 2007), principles and updates (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016) and the nature of emotional and personal intelligence (Mayer, 2018; Caruso, Mayer, Bryan, Phillips, & Salovey, 2019).

The Salovey-Mayer model defines EI as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to assist thinking, assessed by an ability-based measure (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016). This model suggested that some people might be more intelligent about emotions than others based on the findings in the areas of emotion, intelligence, psychotherapy and cognition (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016). Further, Ability model has seven principles of EI; they are: (1) EI is a mental ability; (2) EI is best measured as an ability; (3) Intelligent problem solving does not correspond neatly to intelligent behavior; (4) A test's content- the problem solving area involved- must be clearly specified as a precondition for the measurement of human mental abilities; (5) Valid tests have well-defined subject matter that draws out relevant human mental abilities; (6) EI is a broad intelligence; and (7) EI is a member of the class of broad intelligences focused on hot information processing.

**The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence**

Reuven Bar-On of University of Texas Medical Branch came up with the idea of emotional social intelligence (ESI). Bar- On (2006) asserts that "emotional social intelligence (ESI) is composed of various interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, skills and facilitators that combine to determine effective human behavior" (p.2). On the basis of this belief, Reuven Bar-On outlined the model of emotional social intelligence (ESI) since 1982. Bar- On (2006) referred to the construct as ESI rather than Emotional Intelligence (EI) or Social Intelligence (SI). However, the conceptualization of ESI has appeared since the works of Thorndike in 1920 (Bar-On, 2006). The author states that "the Bar-On model describes a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that impact intelligent behavior, measured by self-report within an expandable multi-model approach including interview and multi-rather assessment (p. 2).

The theoretical foundation of the Bar- On model has been taken from Darwin's early work on emotional expression for survival and adaptation, Thorndike Social Intelligence (1920), Wechsler's intelligent behavior (1940, 1943), Sifneos' description of a alexithymia (1967) on the pathological end of the ESI continuum and Appelbaun's conceptualization of Psychological mindedness (1973) according to Bar-On (2006). The conceptual model of Bar-On's ESI comprises five components: They are; 1. Intrapersonal intelligence, 2. Interpersonal intelligence, 3. Stress management, 4. Adaptability, and 5. General mood. These five components are composed of fifteen competencies (Avarzamani, Hosein, Shahmiri, Mohsen & Ebrahimi, 2021). According to Bar-on (2006) Intrapersonal intelligence comprises self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualization. Interpersonal intelligence is composed of empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationships. Further, stress management consisted of

stress tolerance and impulse control. Adaptability includes reality testing, flexibility and problem solving. And, general mood includes optimism and happiness.

## Employee Retention

The Human Resource Department plays an active role in keeping its employees in proper places. Lockwood (2006) stated, "attracting, developing, retaining and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude with implementation of integrated strategies is important to increase workplace productivity to meet current and future business needs" (p. 2). In the words of Das and Baruah (2013), employee retention is encouraging employees to remain in the organization for a longer period of time. Retention is the ability to hold on to employees (Poudel, 2016). Retaining the existing personnel in an organization is very challenging as the job switch would create a meaningful gap of knowledge and experience (Poudel, 2016). So, for the organizations to be competent, they must have adopted an appropriate strategy to retain their valuable employees for the long run. Previous studies attempted to find out different dimensions of retention. Howard, Liu, Wellins and Williams (2007) used 32 factors of employee retention in the Chinese context. Howard et al (2007) investigated China's retention problem with 215 HR professionals and 862 employees. Howard et al (2007) revealed 18 main reasons why employees leaves.

When we look at the above mentioned 18 reasons of employee turnover, most of the factors are related with the personal and social competencies of Goleman's emotional intelligence model. More specifically, they are inclined to empathy which is under social competence. Some of the factors fall into self- management categories of Goleman's personal competencies. Howard et al. (2007) propose thirty two values and use of retention methods.

**Analysis and Presentation of Results**

This study examines the area of emotional intelligence and faculty retention in Academic Institutions in Nepal. The aim of this phenomenological study was to understand the role of emotional intelligence of leaders on retaining faculty members at Academic Institutions based on their lived experiences. Creswell and Creswell (2017) asserted that phenomenology is a study of inquiry where researchers identify the essence of human experience about certain phenomena as described by the participants.

**Demographic Statistics**

The 11 participants who took part in this dissertation research were Nepalese as well as the Indian citizens working in an Academic Institutions. Among them 9 were Nepali and 2 were Indian. As far as the gender is concerned there were 9 male participants and 2 female participants. With regards to the work experience, all of them have more than 5-year work experience in one place. In addition to their work experience in Nepal, over 81 per cent participants also have international work experience. Among these 11 participants, three of them are Senior Professors having more than 15-year work experience in one place, be it the B-School or the University. One of the participants has theorized the Transformative Learning using auto-ethnographic research methodology. His recent book in this area has been published from one of the reputed publishers of the Netherlands. One participant has also participated at the prestigious TEDx Talk in Nepal. Among 11 participants, two of them are currently working as Associate Dean at Business Schools. Ten participants were associated with B-School/University whereas one participant was selected as a resource person of Neuro-Science. All the participants have masters or above academic qualification. Specifically, four of them have Doctorate degrees whereas seven of them have passed Masters or above degree. In addition to these

participants, the researcher also had consulted one prominent American Professor and a leading Book Author to review focus group discussions' questions.

To ensure the privacy of all the participants, they remained anonymous as promised in the signed consent letter. Instead of their real name code names (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K) are used in reference to their transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 1 provides participant's characteristics relating to their education whereas Table 2 provides participants' demographic characteristics relating to gender, age, nationality, position, experience and their exposure. Table 3 provides participant's characteristics relating to the country of work.

Table 1

Participants' Education

| Masters or Above Degree | Doctorate or Above Degree |
|---|---|
| 7 (A, B, E, G, H, I, J) | 4 (C, D, F, K) |

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics: Personal data

| Name(Coded) | Gender | Approx. Age | Nationality | Position | Experience | Countries of Work |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | M | 30 Years | Nepali | Fulltime Faculty | 5 years | Nepal |
| B | F | 35 Years | Indian | Fulltime Faculty | 6 years | India, Nepal |
| C | M | 50 Years | Nepali | Professor | 15 Years | US, Australia, Nepal |
| D | M | 60 Years | Nepali | Professor/Act. Dean | 25 Years | Germany, Nepal |

| E | M | 35 Years | Nepali | Vice Principal | 5 years | UK, India, Nepal |
| F | F | 50 Years | Indian | Professor/Act. Dean | 15 Years | India, Nepal |
| G | M | 40 Years | Nepali | Asst Professor | 12 Years | Nepal |
| H | M | 35 Years | Nepali | Management Practitioner/Visiting Faculty | 10 Years | India, Japan, Nepal |
| I | M | 30 Years | Nepali | Faculty | 15 Years | Japan, Nepal |
| J | M | 35 Years | Nepali | Fulltime Faculty | 5 years | India, Nepal |
| K | M | 35 Years | Nepali | Neuro-Scientist | 8 years | US, Japan, Nepal |

Table 3

Country of work

| Work in Nepal | Work only in Nepal | Work in two more countries including Nepal |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 11 | 2 (A, G) | 9 ( B, C, D, E, F, H, I, J, K) |

Participant's individual experience as Faculty member or Professor at Academic Institutions /University in emotional intelligence and retention was unique. Nevertheless, common themes that were related to emotional intelligence and retention emerged. Nevertheless, common themes that were related to emotional intelligence and retention emerged within the group. There were five themes and sixteen sub-themes revealed on the basis of in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

Previous studies have shown that emotionally aware leaders know their emotions, realizing their strengths and weaknesses (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Some participants described what it means to realize their own emotions and find out the impact. Their description related the role of EI in retaining faculty members in business school. Participants described that "emotions play a vital role" and it reflects the leader's behavior. They asserted that "behavior of leaders has a high impact on retention of colleagues everywhere".

Self-management is one of the important components of emotional intelligence. Emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement and positive outlook can be experienced by self-management (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). In participants' views "self- management is self- reflection". They described that "self-management is the ability to manage one-self by controlling emotions and desires". Self-controlled leaders keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Participants' asserted that "self–control means control oneself", "it is a kind of reflection and realization of our work", and "a level to which we stop ourselves being tempted, impacted or affected by an event or series of events".

People with initiative are able to seize opportunity and pursue goals beyond what is required of them (Goleman, 2013). Participants described that they take initiative in conducting "Training", "Faculty Development Program", "Research", "Seminar" and "Workshop" for developing the abilities of their colleagues.

Multi-tasking is a regular phenomenon in business schools. Participants described multi-tasking in two ways. Some of them described that it is quite common in their workplace while others say working many jobs at the same time is very confusing. Some participants described that as a faculty, "You need to teach, do research, and conduct seminar and workshop as a part of multiple-task." This researcher consulted one of the leading neuro-scientists of Juntendo

University Tokyo Japan whether multitasking is good to offer to employees from a brain science perspective. The scientist suggested not offering multiple tasks to employees as "our brain does not support it". He described that "Employees will forget the old information if you assign them multiple tasks because it is how our brain works".

The component that supports the leader through driving resonance is social awareness (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). According to them, social awareness consists of empathy, organizational awareness and services. Empathy senses other's emotions, understands their perspective and takes active interest in their concern. Participants described that "leaders' empathetic behavior helps in retaining faculties in business school". Most of the participants described how they understood their colleagues' emotions. Some participants described that they listened to their colleagues attentively and helped them by initiating pathways to ease the difficult task and bringing faculty members in joint research.

Emotional maturity is a kind of controlling emotions and behaving rationally (Rai & Khanal, 2017). Participants believed that the emotional maturity was enhanced by admitting mistakes and honoring promises and meeting commitments. Participants described that they "committed mistakes" and believed that "once you accept or apologize you correct the thing and get eased". Most of the participants described that they showed their emotional maturity by honoring promises and meeting commitments.

People having "developing others" competency acknowledge and reward people's strengths and accomplishments. They also offer useful feedback for fostering people's skills (Goleman, 2013). Participants described that they assisted their colleagues either "involving them in writing workshop" or "creating congenial environment and platform to organize training".

The art of handling relationships starts with legitimacy which is regarded as the acting from one's genuine feelings (Goleman,

Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). In this context, participants' described how they experienced teamwork and collaboration, inspiring leadership, leadership competencies, organizational commitment, conflict resolution and effective communication.

Leaders with collaboration and teamwork competencies draw others into active, enthusiastic commitment and generate friendly and helpful environments (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Participants described that "Business school or University cannot function well without teamwork of faculty and their collaboration". Working with a common goal enhances teamwork and collaboration according to the description of the participants.

Inspirational leadership guides and motivates people with a compelling vision and they get people excited about a common mission (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Participants described that "Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups toward common goals is essential for team success". They experienced that "firm's culture and leadership should indoctrinate the colleagues about the goal of the firm".

Star leaders adopted various sets of leadership competencies. One leader might excel through self-confidence, flexibility, initiation, the drive to achieve, empathy, developing others whereas another leader might be good in self-awareness, integrity, staying calm, organizational awareness, influence and collaboration (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Each participant's description on leadership competencies was unique. Leaders with these competencies, according to participants' description, "foster team culture and encourage fellow members to achieve the common goal of an organization". They described that "leadership competencies need to be dynamic due to rapid change in the global economy".

Emotions can become messy due to the rise of conflict. However, conflict has to be productive rather than destructive (Ryback, 1998). Participants described that "Conflict is inevitable"

and leaders should be "aware of this regular phenomenon". They described the "origination of conflict rooted due to the coordination problem". So, in their experiences, participants described that "leadership should act as a moderator to resolve the conflict in the business school/University. It is also important to note "what approach individual or collective will take matters in handling conflict", according to the experiences of the participants.

Communication is one of the most important competencies in relationship management (Goleman, 2013). In order to retain employees, participants described that "communication provides a vital role". Minor issues turnout to be major ones "due to lack of proper communication" and if leaders listen properly "two thirds of the problems get solved" according to the experience of the participants. Since the employee turnover intention will go down due to proper communication, participants are encouraged to "listen more to the colleagues concern" in the business school.

Retention is the ability to hold employees in an organization. Retaining the existing employees in an organization is very challenging because the job switch would create an important gap of knowledge and experience (Poudel, 2016). Researchers believe that emotional intelligence is negatively related to employee turnover intention which will enhance retention (Goleman, 2013; Koorella & Perumal, 2019). Participants described that "work culture", "personality alignment", "fairness," "pay and perks'', "work-life balance", "career development", "faculty development program", "team spirit", "continuous improvement", "fringe benefit" are major determinants of employee retention in the organization. These factors are in line with Herzberg's two factor theory as examined by Poudel (2018).

Leadership and relationship's play a key role in organizational success (Nowack, 2008). As such relationships between employees and leaders play an influencing role on employees' career decisions (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi & Cocoran, 2017). During the focus group

discussion, the majority of participants described that leadership behavior is one of the most influencing determinants of employee retention. For this. "Leader should be flexible" and "he/she should be receptive to the openness of new ideas".

Similarly, organizational policies also equally important which serve several purposes such as smooth communication on employment conditions, treating fairness and equality in organization and developing employee handbooks or policy books can be offered by organizational policies (McConnell, 2005). Participants described that "policies guide the leader" and "it encourages any kind of initiative." Participants experienced that "the consistency in payment and facilities are ensured" through policies as well.

It is necessary to lower the stress of the employee at the workplace. When a person is stressed the adrenal glands release the hormone called Cortisol (Cadman, 2020). In a conversation with Dr Parajuli at Juntendo University Tokyo, the Neuro-scientists suggest business schools give attention to their faculty in sports, food, pairing protocol, and environmental enrichment initiatives for retention from brain science perspectives.

Sports play a vital role to release stress and make us feel happy according to Dr. Parajuli. According to him, sports activity helps in maintaining a balanced level of cortisol. So, one way of making your faculty happy at work is involving them in sport activities by assigning them to club activity.

Food is another important thing for keeping our brain healthy. Selhub (2015) stated that the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin is highly influenced by the billions of "good" bacteria that make up your intestinal micro-biome. Dr Parajuli agreed this and asserted that "In order to make your emotional brain intact you need to have food that produces friendly bacteria which have positive effect on your brain."

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Dr Parajuli suggests the experiment to be conducted for 12 weeks for the faculty to provide the food or drink with music every weekend and observe the result. Food with music is a pairing protocol. He stated that food should be specific. Once you get them used to it, after sometime even if you provide only food they automatically remember their favourite music there. This is another way of keeping your faculty happy at the workplace according to this neuro-scientist.

Dr Parajuli described that environmental enrichment program also helps faculty in a natural way to become happy. He suggested that "the natural way or Environmental Enrichment (EE) initiatives should be taken by the organization by assigning clubs for those employees in green areas". In his view, their "brain will be recharged and employees' brain will be happy having the exposure of greenery."

## Summary of Results

This qualitative phenomenological study explored individual experiences of eleven participants involved in Academic Institutions and University. This study revealed what they experienced and how they experienced the role of emotional intelligence in retaining faculty at the Academic Institutions in Nepal.

The results showed that each participant's experience on EI and retention was unique. However common themes that were related to EI and retention emerged within a group. Five themes and sixteen sub-themes revealed themselves: 1) Self-awareness- it included a sub-theme of emotional self-awareness. 2) Self-management- this theme reflected the experience of the participants on self- management. It includes the sub-themes of self-control, initiative and multiple tasks. 3) Social awareness- participant's descriptions on how they experience social awareness included in this theme. This theme included the sub-themes empathy, emotional maturity and developing others. 4) Relationship-this theme describes how participants managed relationships. The sub-

themes included inspiring leadership, teamwork and collaboration and communication, conflict management, leadership commitment and organizational commitment, and effective communications. 5) Retention- this theme reflected participants' views on retention, the major determinants of retention in Academic Institutions. The sub-themes included employee satisfaction: factors of motivation, organization policy, leader's behaviour and neuro-science perspective on better faculty retention. With this, sports, food, pairing protocol and environmental enrichment (EE) initiatives were revealed from a brain-science perspective by the neuro-scientist who was involved in this research as a resource person.

The results generally confirm the importance of EI in employee retention. Results showed that the leader who wants to retain his competent employees has to have emotional intelligence. There are specific EI competencies that have a greater impact on retention of faculty in Academic Institutions. The competencies of empathy, self -control, inspirational leadership, conflict management, delivering services, effective communication, teamwork and collaboration have a greater role in retaining faculty at the Academic Institutions. Furthermore, organization policies, leadership behaviour and motivating factors too are equally given priority in retaining faculty. Last but not the least, an important finding of this study was to understand the neuro-science perspective and its relation on employee satisfaction which opened a new avenue in the research study.

Table 1

Research questions/Sub-questions and their relations to  the themes

| Research questions/Sub-questions & Factors | Themes |
|---|---|
| R1a | One: Self-awareness |
| R1b | Two: Self-management |
| R1c, R1d, R1e | Three: Social-awareness |

| R2a, R2b, R2c, R2d, R2e | Four: Relationship management |
|---|---|
| 1. Factors of motivation<br><br>2. Organization policy or leadership competencies?<br><br>3. Others: Brain-Science perspectives | Five: Employee retention |

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Previous studies (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1998; Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013; Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016; Rashid, Bajwa & Batool, 2016; Ramirez, Gudi, Griffin & Sherbert, 2016; Ul-Hassaan, 2016; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017; Laxmi & Rao, 2018; Riaz, Naem, Khanzada & Butt, 2018; Alzyoud, Ahmed, Alzgool & Pahi, 2019; Ferando & Gamage, 2019; Giao, Vuog, Huan, Tushar & Quan, 2020; & Krishnan & A, 2020) revealed the strong evidence on EI. Similarly, retention of employees has been largely discussed by many authors (Howard, Liu, Wellins & Williams, 2007; Poudel, 2016; Singh, 2018). However, acknowledging the role of emotional intelligence in retaining faculty in Academic Institutions /University remains a problem.

This study aimed to address two primary research questions: 1) What is the impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee retention? and 2) How can social competencies aid in managing employee retention in academic institutions? The study also explored sub-questions related to these main inquiries, such as the influence of self-awareness of one's mood on understanding others' emotions in the workplace, the role of self-regulation in maintaining relationships with subordinates, the importance of empathy in understanding others' perspectives, the impact of emotional maturity on coordinating with subordinates, and the significance of being mindful of one's image in developing overall interpersonal

skills. Additionally, the study investigated the role of collaboration and teamwork competencies, visionary leadership competencies, leadership competencies, and communication competencies in managing employee retention.

The results of the study revealed several findings that support the significant role of emotional intelligence in employee retention. These findings align with previous studies on emotional intelligence, confirming its influence on employee retention. The study also demonstrated that emotional intelligence is crucial for leaders seeking to retain business faculty. The research highlighted the importance of various emotional intelligence competencies proposed by Goleman (2013) in the context of retaining faculty members in academic institutions. These competencies include empathy, emotional self-awareness, self-control, initiative, developing others, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, and effective communication, among others. Additionally, the study emphasized the relevance of considering brain science perspectives, such as sports, pairing protocols, the spacing effect, and environmental enrichment initiatives, to promote employee happiness and productivity and retain faculty members.

This study provides significant contributions to both theory and practice in the field of emotional intelligence, deepening the understanding of its role in faculty retention. It not only contributes to ongoing debates in emotional intelligence research but also introduces a new area of study in the literature.

The researcher believes that the following practical recommendation needs to be taken into consideration by the top level management of the Academic Institutions so as to retain their competent faculty members.

a)  There is the need to understand the emotions of the faculty by the Academic Institutions' management.
b)  Leaders must acknowledge the effort and contribution of the faculty members showing their positive behaviour.

c) Leaders should build and develop the habit of self -reflection, self-realization and frequent critical thinking on their work, whether they performed it correctly.

d) Leaders need to take initiatives of conducting periodic research seminars, workshop and faculty development programs (FDP) and other capacity building training for their faculties.

e) Though multi-tasking is a regular job in many organizations, it is not a wise thing to assign multi-tasks to the employees according to neuro-scientists. So, B-Schools should consult with Neuro-Scientists or Psychologists for the effectiveness of enhancing employees' productivity from brain science perspectives.

f) Leaders need to show their empathetic behaviour to their subordinate which is largely missing in this part of the world.

g) Admitting mistakes and honouring promises and meeting commitments will be value added for leaders' emotional maturity. So, leaders should admit their mistakes, honour the promises and meet their commitments.

h) Leaders should not ignore their faculties' concern, they should rather engage in the pertinent issues of their employees by listening to them properly. Effective communication channels between the faculty and the management must be set up so that message will not be misinterpreted. Organization's vision, mission and objectives should properly be communicated and understood by all the employees.

i) Organizational and employee goals should be aligned in such a way that firm's culture and leadership always indoctrinate the colleagues about the goal of the firm where employees' career growth would be ensured.

j) The major determinant factors of faculty retention such as work-life balance, career-development, fairness of rule implementation, team spirit, continuous improvement

of faculty, adequate pay and perks, work culture, faculty development program(FDP) should be given priority in Academic Institutions.

k) B-Schools need to carry out and promote research on EI, employee behaviour, job satisfaction, faculty retention etc., on a periodic basis. They better deploy at least one psychologist if not neuro-scientist who can suggest them from evidence based findings for better faculty retention.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Employee retention is a challenging job in any organization. Retaining a competent faculty is essential for any organization including Academic Institutions. The results of this study showed that the role of EI is really important in employee retention. Findings from this study suggest that leaders with EI competencies have value addition in retaining faculty in Academic Institutions.

The main limitation of this research is the limited generalizability of its findings as it may not be necessarily applicable in other countries due to unique tradition and cultural orientation of the participants. However, the scope of the research can be enlarged to include wider scope of academia of Nepal.

The result of this study can be used as a foundation to conduct more extensive studies in the field of EI and employee retention. This research was performed on a small number of participants. So, future research should examine the issue with a larger sample involving a diversity of participants from a wider area engaged in the educational sectors. Since this study was limited to qualitative phenomenological approaches, future study would benefit more from using other research methodologies.

For future research opportunities, this researcher would recommend researchers conduct different further research in different areas and different geographical locations with relatively

larger sample sizes using different research methodologies. So, in this context, understanding the lived experience of different participants in Nepal; it is suggested for future research to understand the experience on role of EI on faculty retention in South Asian perspective using mixed research method.

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# Guru as an Academic Leader in Vedic Tradition: A Review

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Vedic literature from the Indian Subcontinent does not use the phrase 'academic leadership' or any other terminology precisely equivalent to this; still, rishi-munis , gurus, and even some kings with passion for knowledge, who provided the environment for exploration and dissemination of knowledge and wisdom can be considered as academic leaders in true sense. In this line, this article reports the review results on the concept of educational leadership depicted in Vedic literature. For this purpose, we explored writings on Vedic wisdom tradition and philosophy, mainly in Google Scholar, using the keyphrases "academic leadership in Vedic literature," "education system in India," "Sanatan philosophy," "Hindu education system," "Gurukul education," and "education system in Mithila." The review results revealed that academic leaders were selected based on practical expertise and specialization in content knowledge, particularly skills, knowledge, character, moral values, perseverance, and gratitude. Academic leaders were father figures, a source of inspiration, role models, and much more. Besides, leaders were characterized by honesty, devotion, and trust, and they had a passion for education and dedication to the profession with a desire for the quest for eternal truth. At current times, when the selection of leadership in academia is based on non-academic influence, such as political inclination, nepotism, and favoritism, neglecting leadership qualities and performance, particularly in Nepal and many

other countries, the article provides valuable insights into academic leadership.

## Introduction

Western knowledge constructs mainly induce different educational leadership models prevalent in academic discourse, whereas the Eastern Vedic knowledge system and wisdom traditions are less explored, focusing on academic leadership. The Sanatan system is related to Vaidhika or Vedic dharma, which refers to "the religion of perfect knowledge" (Banaras Hindu University [BHU], 1904, p. 2). The Eastern Vedic knowledge system has a whole scheme of knowledge governed by philosophy (BHU,1904). To lead the goal of life, Vaidhika Dharma presumes a need for influential leaders who can, in any difficult circumstances, retain balance, think clearly, and are farsighted and could accomplish the goals at hand through the right actions. All these ideas clarify that Sanatan dharma is about religious practice and the philosophy of life under a good leader's guidance and support. Different Sanatan Hindu literature and scriptures such as the Vedas, Purans, Upanishads, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Sankhya philosophy and other philosophical writings express such life philosophies.

The Hindu scriptures and philosophical books written approximately 5000 to 2500 years ago and practised in the then Indian Subcontinent were at the centre of educational activities. Even today, the scriptures are quoted in academic dialogues. The Subcontinent also had its unique educational model, also considered the Sanatan Hindu system of education that mainly covers the Gurukula system of education and hermitage

educational practice. Hermitage educational practice was the means for life transformation since education could lead an individual through the interaction of the self with nature in the quest for enlightenment. So, the educational practices under the supervision and grace of the teacher leader required personal guidance and a self-directive approach from the pupil's side, too. Therefore, the inward method of the teacher, the spirit of his life and work, was even more important than what he revealed in a formal educational setting (Wijesinghe,1987).

At this pretext, the research explores the notion of academic leadership practised in the Eastern part of the world since antiquity, exploring the characteristic features of leadership that can potentially be applied in the modern context. Therefore, this review article aims to explore the lessons from the Sanatan Hindu literature relevant to current academic leadership practices. As leadership significantly impacts and shapes the culture of any educational institution and individuals, as Soni and Trivedi (2018) point out, leaders require spiritual integrity to lead a group of people effectively. Furthermore, "it is important for a leader that his actions should speak louder than words, the ethics demonstrated by him should be high, and should show respect and compassion to others" (p. 5) as followers learn more from his actions than words. Such leadership lessons from Sanatan Hindu literature will turn guiding principles into academic leaders in the present context.

Amidst the widespread criticism of the selection procedure of academic leadership in the global and Nepali contexts, mainly influenced by political inclination, nepotism and favouritism, the article also provides a clear message for the selection of leadership. This criticism of the selection procedure is prevalent even in the United States as Gmelch and Buller (2015), in their seminal text Building Academic Leadership

Capacity, argue that the appointments in higher education leadership are political, and very few are found to have formal leadership education. Further, Kouzes and Ponser (2008) argue that what people most look for and admire in a leader is constant which are honest, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring. These propositions of a leader's qualities are the needs for influential leaders. Vedic philosophy believes that effective leadership requires behaving to merit the respect, loyalty, and obedience of those being led. It shows that Vedic philosophy or the Sanatan belief system has kept the concept of education and leadership a prominent factor for the human world.

Therefore, the primary concern of this review article is to highlight significant trajectories of leadership that could be applied in academic sectors so that modern educational leaders could conceptualize the basics of Sanatan academic leadership practices and try to reform their practice. For that purpose, articles on Sanatan and Vedic philosophies were searched in Google Scholar using the keyphrases such as "academic leadership in Sanatan literature," "education system in India," "Sanatan philosophy," "Hindu education system," "Gurukul education," and "education system in Mithila" to explore on academic leadership, its categories, and the fundamental values to adapt in the leadership arena. During the reading process, important contents relating to educational leadership were highlighted, coded, categorized, and thematized to develop a coherent narrative review article.

This observation of the discussion over leadership in Satana literature has drawn basic representing categories or the characteristic features of academic leadership as a father figure with honesty and trust who is an ideal role model to follow who possesses good character, devotion, the quest for truth, and passion for education, who is also a motivator, empathetic and

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can be a trustworthy guide. The categorical discussion focuses on the selective mode and fundamental values of academic leaders that we could adopt from the Sanatan education system and Vedic philosophy. The thematic concentration of the article begins with the significant norms to focus on the selection procedure for academic leadership.

## Selection Criteria for Academic Leadership

Primarily two significant criteria – cognitive skills and behavioural merit – provided a basis for selecting academic leadership during the Sanatan period. Furthermore, gurus and rishi-munis, who were also the academic leaders of the Gurukul possessed practical expertise and specialization in content that may be exclusive of academic degrees but required methodological expertise in Gurukul educational practice. Significant criteria for recruitment were "skills, knowledge, character, moral values, mindset, level of patience, intimacy with students, willingness to train to perfection, perseverance of results and loving and caring attitude to students" (Soni & Trivedi, 2018). Once they were selected, they used to take full responsibility for the students'/ followers' future with an open heart as they considered imparting knowledge as their primary dharma (Kashalkar-Karve, 2013; Soni & Trivedi, 2018). Since the teacher leader is regarded as the primary source of the practical and supreme knowledge system, it is believed that the teacher needs to have benevolence that leads to different virtues in a leader like compassion, beneficence, patience, appreciativeness, and kindness (BHU, 1904). Hence, the leadership selection process is very particular and can also have great lessons for modern academia. The following categories further represent the characteristic features or defining criteria of academic leadership in the Indian Subcontinent during the Sanatan period.

**Leaders as Father Figures**

Academic leadership in Sanatan literature is portrayed as a father figure, and the learners are always focused on pursuing the teachers with teachableness and obedience. Disciples remained serviceable and careful not to offend their guru as they regarded the guru as the father in the highest sense (BHU, 1904). The disciples' respect towards their guru showed that the academic leaders earned the highest regard and were responsible toward followers. The educational leader in Sanatan scriptures is presented as a guru, a counsellor, a father figure, an ideal hero, a source of inspiration, and a personality with divinity integrated (Mlecko, 1982). Among these representations, gurus as father figures are the most important; Manu Smriti explains guru is the one who gives the knowledge of the Veda that ensures eternal rewards both in this life and after death. Furthermore, the Sanatan Dharma projects the father figure to identify any leader with the satvik identity accurately. The sloka [stanza] of the Bhagavad Gita highlights that the governor or leader should treat the public like a father in all situations.

In ancient times, in the system of Gurukul, the disciple not only learned holistic knowledge of life but also lived with the guru at his residence or Ashrama, where the guru used to provide quality time to the disciple quenching the thirst for knowledge of their disciple by answering their queries. Thus, Sanatan literature reveals that the academic leaders always kept students at the center and tried to solve their problems (Ramteke et al., 2015). During their stay with the guru, pupils served their guru in their daily chores. Similarly, even in the Buddhist tradition, teachers consider their pupils their children, and pupils should consider their preceptors as fathers (Ramanan, 2007).

This ideal relationship between the guru and the pupil can be further substantiated by referencing the book Ritual, Knowledge, and Being: Initiation and Veda Study in Ancient India written by Smith (1986), in which he argues that there were rules which prohibit the relationship between a pupil and daughter of the guru. A physical relationship or marriage between the two was considered incestuous. Pupils thus completely respected their guru as a father, and the relationship between the teacher and the students was that of care, respect, and trust. The association was also personal and intimate, unlike the formal relationship between modern academic leaders and followers (Shelly, 2015; Soni & Trivedi, 2018). However, in this relationship between the guru and his disciple, the guru held power conspicuous by his prestige and influence because of his exceptional knowledge and function.

**Honesty, Devotion, and Trust**

Though the leader was privileged with power, prestige and influence during the Sanatan period, as an academic leader, the guru provided guidance and knowledge and led followers on the spiritual path with honesty and devotion; in turn, the pupil reciprocated with complete obedience and trust (Mlecko, 1982). For that, the guru explains and interprets the Sanatan scriptures. Besides, the pupils in the Ashrama learned from the guru's life, his daily activities, casual conversation, silence, diet, and his companionship with the guru (Mlecko, 1982). Additionally, the relationship between the guru and the pupils was maintained by what Panini calls a 'vidya-sambandha,' the union between the two through knowledge. This link was as strong as a biological connection between father and son (Smith, 1986).

The devotion is followed as the norm for the pupils to be bestowed with knowledge practices. Pupils honestly serve the

guru in getting involved in the knowledge acquisition process. Pupils perceive the guru as the supreme source of knowledge and wisdom with complete trust. Manusmriti highlights the need for devotion in pupils as a man by digging with a spade obtains water, so he who does service obtains the wisdom enshrined in his guru (BHU, 1987).

As pupils used to live in the house or Ashrama of the guru and acquire knowledge, this system is also known as the Gurukul education system. Etymologically, Gurukula means learning while living with the guru in his house. This kind of teaching-learning developed suavity, intimacy, and complete trust between the two, due to which Shishya showed complete trust and surrendered to the guru. This sense of discipline and cordial relationship between the guru and the pupil is highly revered and widely known worldwide (Kashalkar-Karve, 2013; Rather, 2015). Because of the fatherly care and trust between the guru and the disciples, wholeheartedly devote themselves to and respect him.

## Lived Example

During the Sanatan period, academic leaders lived with the ideals cherished by the pupils and communities. Mlecko (1982) quotes Ramdasa, who highlights the positional value of the guru as "without the grace of the Guru, one cannot realize the Self; contemplation and concentration, devotion and worship, would be all useless without the grace of guru." Guru uplifts the world's knowledge and virtues and becomes an exemplary force for life, devotion, and understanding. Ramadasa clarifies that such lived examples of a guru's existence should be reflective as wisdom, dispassionateness, devotion, sadhana, rightful conduct, spiritual awareness, mindfulness, morality, and justice, and the observation of the

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meaning constitute the characteristic foundation of a guru. The guru's ideals are connected to the main aim of education, which mainly include character building and exploration of eternal truth. Lived example of a high character set up of the guru provided the best way to develop character and overall development of the pupils. In contrast, pupils followed and applied these ideals according to their capacities. Pupils set their nature through the immediate living example of the guru with traits such as purity, thirst for knowledge, perseverance, faith, humility, submission, and veneration (Radha, 2019; Mlecko, 1982). In other words, these qualities inspired pupils to follow in the footsteps of the guru.

Furthermore, apart from explaining the scriptures, the guru revealed the meaning of life as he is the immediate, incarnate example and inspirational source for the students before them, serving students as the role model to follow (Mlecko, 1982; Chandra, 1994). The best leaders are those who not only teach their pupils but also make their disciples worthy citizens possessing ideal virtues. In an ideal educational environment, the teacher becomes a father figure and a role model, as the best way to develop the pupil's character is through the personal example of the high character setup of the teacher leader (Rather, 2015). Add a sentence.

## Good Character

As Sanatan education highly prioritized value education, and for them, education was not just the amount of information students received; it valued life-building, man-making, character building and assimilation of ideas received. Sanatan education gave importance to and prioritized such a system through which character is formed, the strength of mind is increased, and intellect is expanded so that disciples can stand on their feet.

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And inspiring pupils with such ideals are possible only through living examples in front of them (Radha, 2019; Shelly, 2015). In such a case guru's position is to perform the parent's character with virtuous life values. BHU (1904) notes that Manusmriti presents the guru's position as the parents' position because of his intimacy and his approach to the follower; that is, the guru was expected to expound the texts of scripture and live them in an attractive, lucid, patient and kind manner. Why focus on character in education is that character is the combination of virtues and happiness that is meant for the success story of life. The Sanatan philosophy depicts that "character is that on which lasting success depends" since intellect fails if the person cannot have virtues and happiness. In every walk of life, the character is the most sought-after and trusted, and a man of good character is respected and admired everywhere. (BHU, 1904).

If we look at history, we find a lot of such living examples who inspired us to lead an ideal life with virtues. Viswamitra, the mentor of lord Rama, was a great saint and a role model from whom he developed all the virtues (Mlecko, 1982). Even in the Medieval period, before the Muslim invasion of the Indian Subcontinent, the system of education prevalent was primarily Brahminical and Buddhistic, and both aspired to acquire knowledge and good character (Jha, 2008). Similarly, Vedic education under the guidance of an ideal teacher resulted in a rebirth of the students, an ontological change in the students (Smith, 1986). The Vedic system focuses on the four pillars of educational practices concerning the character-building proposing, "the four pillars of this Gurukul, namely patience, perseverance, perfection and pleasure provide true essence of education to the students" (Soni & Trivedi, 2018, p. 57). Academic leaders must concentrate on and exemplify good character models in educational practices.

However, in the Gita, satvik (attributed to good nature) quality is inferred as a fundamental attribute to make a proper leadership contribution. According to BHU (1904), such satvik quality of a leader, Krishna's main lesson to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita, is a prominent factor in leading any situation since the satvik leaders are driven by the harmony between the self and the surroundings and a repelled from provoking confrontation or disparity.

## Dedication and Passion for Education

Academics in the Sanatan period were highly dedicated to their profession. Dedication is one of the prominent components and values for work ethics in teachers' and pupils' existence as they learn to be honest, persistent, and judicious. Soni and Trivedi (2018) discuss 'self-reliance' as a standard of the pupils by building the capacity to judge, devote, and make significant contributions in the workplace through the knowledge and skills they learn under the guru in Gurukula. They claim that "this system of education teaches dedication, honesty, and perfection in the work" (p. 57). Furthermore, academics in the Gurukula were not driven by any vested interest, monetary considerations, or interest of any other type (Soni & Trivedi, 2018). From this, we can infer how high regard they attest to education. Education was considered a source of illumination and power which transformed one's life, and the role of the teacher in this transformation through their enormous knowledge was crucial (Kashalkar-Karve, 2013; Wijesinghe, 1987). Even Medieval Mithila, the historical region of the Indian Subcontinent that lies in the current Janakpur district of Nepal and its neighbouring area of Bihar, India, occupied a significant position in educational development. Mithila had a brilliant tradition of education since the days of Janak,

the philosopher king of Mithila, who maintained a galaxy of learned scholars in his court and encouraged learning in various ways (Jha, 2008). Jha (2008) adds that even though "there was nothing like the State Department of Education to coordinate and look after the educational institutions and their activities, the education made remarkable progress under the patronage of the sovereigns, the aristocrats and the well-to-do sections" (p. 1261) of the society. Brahminic knowledge and philosophy flourished only under the realization of historical necessity, patronage, and leadership of kings of the Janak Dynasty. They were involved in educational pursuits in such a way that it resulted in the outburst of intellectual activities. Mainly, Janaka Vaideha, one of the kings of the Janaka Dynasty who possessed a philosophical and inquisitive bent of mind, regularly held conferences inviting the most prominent scholars of the time. Janaka Vaideha and Yajnavalkya initiated Brahmavidya in Mithila, which evolved and flourished here. Yajnavalkya is credited as the author of Shukla Yajurveda (Jha, 2010). Thus, the sustenance and development of Brahmanic knowledge were possible under the leadership and patronage of the Janaka Dynesty.

## Motivation, Empathy, and Guidance

An academic leader understands the ethos of the pupils, identifies with them, and motivates and guides them to attain the highest ideals. Highlighting the Vedic education system, even Swami Vivekananda argued,

> You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. All you can do is on the negative side – you can only help. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its nature. Loosen the soil a little so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge around

it, see that it is not killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature (Radha, 2019, p. 112).

Vivekananda stressed that teachers should inspire and guide pupils by removing the obstacles disciples undergo during the exploration of knowledge. Besides, the guru in ancient education symbolized the art of living and learning (Kashalkar-Karve, 2013). The role of the teacher, thus, is to provide an environment for the awakening of knowledge, during which the guru invokes the spirit of inquiry and guides him (Chandra, 1994). During the exploration of knowledge, a "true teacher immediately comes down to the level of the student, and transfers his soul to the student's soul and sees through and understands through his mind" (Radha, 2019, p. 113).

**Quest for the Eternal Truth**

Unlike the modern education system, which aims to develop skills required for the job market, Sanatan education primarily seeks to liberate people from ignorance and help them attain enlightenment. During the period, as education was considered a source of liberation from ignorance and attainment of enlightenment, the role of the teacher during the learning process was considered extremely crucial (Wijesinghe, 1987). Etymologically, as "guru" means "dispeller of ignorance," first guru or the leader should come out of it; then only the guru can guide others to eternal truth. So, the guru must be the seeker of the truth; then, he can liberate and help attain enlightenment (Mlecko, 1982). Thus, Sanatan education sought to address the holistic development of the pupils to achieve self-fulfilment and spiritual enlightenment and reach the level of a human god. As John Keats popularly states, "Knowledge enormous makes

a God of me," similar sentiment was expressed in ancient Sanatan texts where Brahmins were deemed "human gods" by virtue of their study and teaching of Vedas (Wijesinghe, 1987; Smith, 1986). In Sanatan Hindu and Buddhist traditions, only an enlightened person could be a guru who could guide students in their pursuit of Nirvana (Ramanan, 2007). Wijesinghe (1987) has elaborated the teacher's role in leading an individual towards self-directed enlightenment since education was not the mere acquisition of objective knowledge but an aid to self-fulfilment and enlightenment.

## Conclusion

This review article indicates that though the Sanatan Hindu scriptures, education system, and philosophy do not directly argue about academic leadership, it has a clear message to current leadership practices for its reformation and improvisation. Amidst the widespread critique against leadership in general and educational leadership in particular, this article provides a clear message for selection criteria that should be based on merit and the qualities of academic leadership. That is, leaders should have a passion for education in the first place. Besides, academics are expected to maintain a harmonious relationship with their followers. To lead the followers or students in the right direction, leaders must demonstrate lived examples to follow, as students learn more from the behaviours of the guru or leader than from their preaching. In short, significant lessons that we can learn and apply are that an academic leader should be honest, trustworthy, loving, caring, empathetic, motivating, and a truth seeker. Leadership must provide a living example that followers can idealize and follow. Leaders walk the talk.

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# The Role of Bengali Women in the 1971 Non-Cooperation Movement Against the Government of Pakistan

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The Lahore resolution of 1940 and the bi-nationalism of Muhammad Ali Jinnah were considered as the cornerstones of the Pakistan movement. The demand for partition of India on the basis of the Lahore resolution sparked a firestorm among the Muslim community. India split seven years after the Lahore resolution was tabled. But the partition of the country in 1947 and the creation of Pakistan could not provide a state solution to the question of the Bengali nation. As a result, for twenty-three long years, the Bengalis were subjected to various forms of discrimination by the military rule of West Pakistan. Eventually they started a movement demanding the elimination of this inequality and the establishment of democracy. Pakistan's military government was forced to hold its first national elections in 1970. The popular East Pakistan Awami League, led by Bangabandhu, won a single majority in the elections. But even though the Awami League gained a majority, the military government did not hand over power to the majority party. As the leader of the majority party, Bangabandhu called for a non-cooperation movement. Men as well as women participated in the movement and played a vital role in gaining independence in the country. So, the present article highlights the participation of Bengali women in the non-cooperation movement and their role in the movement.

**Keywords:** Movement, independence, government, women, people, freedom, assembly

**Introdction**

In 1966, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented to the people a six-point program demanding our survival in order to break the structure of the Pakistani colonial state and achieve the total liberation of the Bengalis. General Ayub Khan took refuge in torture by declaring it a separatist program. As the government's repression grows, so does the popularity of the 6-point program. With the addition of the 11-point program of the student society, a new impetus was created in the liberation struggle of the Bengalis. The 6-point and 11-point movements spread rapidly throughout East Pakistan. General Ayub Khan became frightened by this and filed the Agartala Conspiracy Case (1968) to suppress the movement. But this case has created panic in the minds of the people of East Pakistan. The tide of national liberation came in the consciousness of Bengalis. The result was the mass uprising of 1969.This wave of Bengali mass uprising also took place in the 1970 general elections. The Awami League under the leadership of Bangabandhu won a landslide victory in the elections. But the Pakistani ruling class chose the path of conspiracy without handing over power to the Bengalis and took the situation to the final end. Forced, Bangabandhu declared a non-cooperation program in the whole of Bengal. Therefore, at the call of Bangabandhu, non-cooperation was observed in the whole of Bengal from 2nd March to 25th March (1971).Men as well as Bengali women spontaneously participated in this non-cooperation movement. The government of Pakistan became obsolete after the participation of women. This article was originally written to highlight the role of Bengali women in the anti-government non-cooperation movement in Pakistan.

None of the published books and articles on the important role of women in the non-cooperation movement have found a place for research analysis. In other words, in the books and articles published on the non-cooperation movement, in most cases, some

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issues are discussed sporadically from a general point of view. Therefore, I have written this article realizing the need for important research on Bengali women in the non-cooperation movement.

## Research Methods and Data Collection

Basically I collected data from primary sources. Newspapers and periodicals are important elements of the non-cooperation movement. Information has also been collected from various women's participation programs aired on Bangladesh Radio, BTV and BBC. Moreover, I have collected information by attending meetings and conferences of various women's organizations. For the purpose of providing information about the role of women in the non-cooperation movement, I have interviewed women who have directly participated in the non-cooperation movement.

## The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Bengali women's society at different stages of the non-cooperation movement against the government of Pakistan. Despite the positional weakness, exploitation, backwardness, disrespect and deprivation in the society, Bengali women society participated in the movement by establishing various women's organizations under different political parties. Among the women participating in the movement were progressive ordinary women of various levels, including school, college and university students. Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to analyze various aspects of the participation of Bengali women in Bangabandhu's non-cooperation movement against the injustices of the Government of Pakistan General Ayub Khan.

## Women's Participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement

When the whole of Bengal awoke to demand independence against the military rule, the East Pakistan Women's Council was

formed under the leadership of Begum Sufia Kamal and Maleka Begum with women of all classes and levels rising to the top of all political parties, views and ideologies. Notable among the members of this women's council are Badrunnesa Ahmed, Johra Tajuddin, Amena Ahmed, Nurjahan Moshed, Selina Banu, Nurjahan Quader, Sara Ali and Razia Banu. All of them were almost non-partisan social workers and housewives. (Islam, 1994, p.34). Ayesha Khanam, Fauzia Moslem, Makhduma Nagis, Kazi Mamta Hena and Munira Akhter were notable in the formation of this Sangram Parishad. They were all students. Leading women and student leaders traveled all over Bengal, including the capital Dhaka, and continued their efforts to establish branches of the Mahila Sangram Parishad (Parveen, 2010, p.50).

On 4 April 1970, the East Pakistan Women's Council was formed with Begum Sufia Kamal as President and Maleka Begum as General Secretary. The members of the council were Mrs. Jobeda Khatun Chowdhury, Begum Abul Hasim, Mrs. Rahima Harun, Mrs. Anwara Bahar, Amena Ahmed, Sara Ali, Hamida Hossain, Nurjahan Quader, Rebecca Mohiuddin, Hurmatunnesa Wadud and Aziza Idris (Begum, 1989, p.187). The organization launched a movement to establish a sovereign parliament, direct election of women to reserved seats, release of political prisoners, equal pay for women workers, establish adequate maternity hospitals, ban food adulteration, reduce food prices and end violence against women (Chowdhury,1998, p. 134). In addition, the organization organizes various meetings and gatherings with women with the aim of creating political awareness to free women from exploitation and deprivation (Begum, 1998, p.21).

In this context, the military-civilian ruling class of Pakistan did not accept the verdict of the people of East Bengal, so the organization, like other organizations, prepared for the struggle against the Ayub government (Islam, 1994, p.35). The women's wing of the Awami League led by Sajeda Chowdhury, Dr. Nurunnahar Zahur, Selima Rahman, Kamrunnahar Zafar and others joined the

struggle (Begum,1998,p.22). When the independence movement started, the processions, meetings and gatherings that the women society of Bengal joined almost every day were discussed in stages.

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Dhaka

On March 1, 1971, when General Yahya Khan adjourned the session of the National Assembly for an indefinite period, a women's rally was held at Gulshan in Dhaka at the call of Matia Chowdhury. Speakers at the meeting called for unity in establishing the rights of the people of Bengal, regardless of party affiliation (Begum, 1998, p.37).

On March 2, 1971, a public meeting was held at Dhaka Paltan Maidan on the initiative of the National Awami Party. The president of the meeting Matia Chowdhury called for the formation of a women's struggle committee in the mahalla. He directed the movement with discipline through this struggle committee. At the meeting, she urged the people to continue the movement with patience and urged the women of Bengal to stay on the streets till independence is achieved. Freedom is our only goal," he said. And the women's society of Bengal is ready to give blood if necessary for this freedom (Rahman, 1998, p.59).

At the women's meeting at the Central Shaheed Minar organized by the East Pakistan Students Union on 4 March 1971, Matia Chowdhury directed to maintain communal harmony in order to achieve the goal of Bengal's freedom struggle. He called upon the people of all walks of life to build liberation forces in the villages (Biswas, 1996, p.100)."We wanted democracy and national rights," Matia Chowdhury told a NAP rally. We voted on the ballot, but for twenty-three years the conspiracy against imperialism, feudalism, monopoly capitalism and democracy did not allow us to live up to that expectation. Men as well as women have come forward

for independence. We women society did not hesitate to break the curfew. We never waited for the guidance of the leaders (Rahmin, 1996, p.78).At the meeting, women leaders in Dhaka strongly protested the army's firing on unarmed workers, saying a single drop of blood would give birth to a new oath of struggle. People are no longer afraid of bullets. Women leader Selina Rahman said the army has been taken back to the barracks. That army should not be taken to the streets anymore. "I don't know what the president will announce today, I don't want to know. I just want to say you have closed the door to democracy, you will open it," he said.

Today 6 points, 11 points must be accepted. The independence of the Bengalis must be clearly acknowledged. We no longer want to be the victims of conspiracy. At the end of the meeting a procession came out. The procession went around different roads and ended at the central Shaheed Minar (The Daily Sonbad, 1971, p.9).

In a statement issued on March 4, 1971, 20 members of radio, television and film announced that they would not work until democracy was established. In support of this declaration, Laila Arjuman Banu, Afsari Khanam, Ferdousi Rahman, Laila Hasan, Rahija Khanam, Bilkis Nasiruddin and Hadida Atiq encouraged the people to join the freedom movement by addressing various rallies. Following their call, men as well as women took to the streets of Dhaka to demand their rights. The government also cracked down on women and men protesting in the streets. But the movement did not stop but spread all over East Bengal day by day(Matia, 1998).

On March 5, 1971, the East Pakistan Women's Parliament demanded a public trial of those responsible for the killing of unarmed students. On the same day, the Eastern Branch of the All Pakistan Women's Association strongly condemned the killing of unarmed Bengalis by the Armed Forces. The association called on women to be ready to accept any sacrifice to protect the country's independence (Jahan, 1987, p.72).

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On 6 March 1971, the East Pakistan Mahila Parishad expressed solidarity with the mass movement. This council called a meeting of women in Dhaka city. At the meeting, tributes were paid to the martyrs of the freedom movement and sympathy was extended to their families. From this meeting, everyone was called to continue the movement with peace and order (Mascarenhas, 1986). On that day, a women's rally was held at the central Shaheed Minar on the initiative of the women's wing of the Awami League. At this meeting it was decided that Bengali members would not join the 25th March National Assembly (Umar, 2006).

The ruling party in West Pakistan has been making excuses for not handing over power to the Awami League, which won the election. In his 17-minute unwritten speech, he highlighted the history of 23 years of deprivation in Pakistan. Women were at the forefront of her public meeting.At the end of the public meeting, the women pledged to accept any sacrifice for the freedom of the country (Parveen, 2010).

On 15 March 1971, the East Pakistan Mahila Parishad organized a women's gathering. The gathering pledged to participate in the freedom struggle and establish an independent Bangladesh free from exploitation. At the end of the rally the women present took out a procession. At the end of the procession, they held two road rallies at Baitul Mukarram and Jinnah Avenue. Begum Sufia Kamal, Begum Nurunnahar Quader, Maleka Begum, Dr. Makhduma Nagiz and Ayesha Khanam addressed the rally.They called on the women of Dhaka to take to the streets to join the rally (Trivedi, 1997).

From March 16, 1971, at 4 pm in the garden at 10/C Segun bagicha, the Mahila Parishad organized women's gymnastics, parades and first aid education. Besides, volunteer forces were formed on the initiative of Mahila Parishad on that day. To strengthen the movement, women were encouraged to join the volunteer forces. Numerous school-college women joined the volunteer force in the campaign for women's councils (Haider, 1989).

The next day, the workers of Mahila Parishad took out a street rally from Dhaka New Market area. Speaking at the meeting, the East Pakistan Mahila Parishad members called upon the people to make all preparations for the establishment of an independent Bangladesh free from exploitation (Ullah, 2009, p.77).

On March 18, 1971, a women's rally of the Awami League's women's wing was held at Shankar on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka under the chairmanship of Farida Parveen. Addressing the women present at the meeting, Badrunnesa Ahmed said that the West Pakistani regime was killing the people of this country indiscriminately. Many young student leaders participating in the freedom movement are being killed. Mothers of Bengal have come forward today with a strong oath to avenge the blood of their children. The struggle of mothers will continue till the final goal is reached. At the meeting, women leader Sajeda Chowdhury paid homage to the martyrs killed in the freedom movement and said, "Bengalis are united today under the leadership of Bangabandhu. They will realize their freedom through any sacrifice." Begum Farida Rahman called upon the mothers and sisters to make the non-cooperation movement led by Bangabandhu a success. At the end of the meeting, Shankar Mahila Awami League was formed with Begum Afsarunnesa as president and Begum Farida Rahman as general secretary (Rahman, 1999).

On 19 March 1971, simultaneous procession rallies were held at Gulbagh, Dhanmondi, Hazaribagh, Azimpur, Central Road, Nayapalt, Jigatla, Rajarbagh and Palashi on the initiative of MahilaParishad. From the gathering, women took an oath to take part in the struggle for an independent Bangladesh under any circumstances (Hossain, 1977).The next day a meeting of local women was held in Dhanmondi. The meeting decided to teach women first aid and parade to make the non-cooperation movement a success. According to the decision, local women

are given first aid and parade education every day from 4 pm (Shafiullah, 1989, p.23).

On 21st March 1971 at 3 pm a meeting was held at Azimpur Girls School on the initiative of Azimpur Women's Branch President Anwara Haque. Under the chairmanship of Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, other women leaders spoke on the importance of non-cooperation movement (Salik, 1978).The meeting pledged not to leave the highway until independence was won and an advisory committee was formed to continue the movement (Jacob, 1997). Moreover, in order to make the non-cooperation movement of Sajeda Chowdhury a success, women were given rifle tanning in front of her residence on Indira Road under the direction of Bangabandhu (Niaji, 1998). Rafia Akhtar Dolly, a woman leader from Dhaka, organized procession meetings as well as women's organizations in Different parts of the country to speed up the non-cooperation movement. She printed leaflets and called for women's participation in the movement (Ali, 1992). At this time, Mrs. Nurjahan Morshed, as an elected member of the Constituent Assembly in 1970, organized women to make the non-cooperation movement a success. She toured the districts and spoke on the need for women to participate in the freedom movement (Khan, 1983).Ayesha Khanam, VP of Begum Rokeya Hall at Dhaka University, formed the Chhatra Sangram Parishad during the non-cooperation movement. He called upon women to participate in the non-cooperation movement through the Student Struggle Council. However, in addition to the Student Struggle Council, she joined the Women's Struggle Committee and took part in meetings with other women leaders (Raja, 1993).

On 23 March 1971, Forkan Begum formed the Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad to make the non-cooperation movement a success. Formed a suicide squad with members of this revolutionary council. Many students of Dhaka University joined this squad. In

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addition to the students, leaders of various women's organizations joined the squad. Among the leaders in the squad were Shamsunnahar Eku, Mumtaz Begum and Farida Akhter Saki. On March 23, the students of Begum Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University celebrated Bangladesh Day. On that day, women from the Outer Stadium marched to Bangabandhu's house and handed over the flag of Bangladesh to Bangabandhu (Hassan, 1994).On the other hand, Dakshur vice-president Mahfuza Khanam rallied women in different parts of the country and took out anti-Yahya Khan Processions in the streets almost every day to make the non-cooperation movement a success. Numerous women took to the streets under his leadership (Kashem, 1992).

During the non-cooperation movement, Baby Moudud was a student of Bengali literature at Dhaka University. When the non-cooperation movement started, the university was closed and he immediately got involved in the movement. He published Runner with nine friends with the aim of building public opinion in favor of independence. Under the leadership of Begum Sufia Kamal and Maleka Begum, medical students were trained in self-defense in the neighborhoods and posters were made by eight college students and put up on the walls at night (Wolpert, 1993). Apart from the capital Dhaka, women's participation in the non-cooperation movement can be seen in different district cities of the country.

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Chittagong**

At a time when the whole country was agitating for independence, the women of Chittagong played a leading role in overcoming various obstacles to strengthen the movement. They encourage school-college students in the city to join the movement through meetings and rallies. As a result of their efforts, the non-cooperation movement intensified in Chittagong city ( Kabir, 1990).

On 11 March 1971 a huge procession was taken out in the city on the initiative of Chittagong Mahila Sangram Parishad. The procession chanted slogans highlighting various discriminations of the Pakistani government. A large meeting was held at JM Sen Hall at 4 pm that day. Dr. Nurunnahar Zahur, Mrs. Selina Rahman, Khaleda Khanam, Rizia Sultana, Gulshan Ara, Jahanara Angur, Sabera Shabnam, Unme Salma, Majia Islam addressed the meeting. The devotees pledged to continue the movement till independence was achieved (Chowdhury, 1986).

On 18 March 1971 a meeting was held at JM Sen Hall on the initiative of Chittagong Mahila Parishad and Awami League. Poet Sufia Kamal was the chief guest and Maleka Begum was the special guest. Hannana Begum, Seema Sen, Dil Afroz Khanam, Jahanara Angur, Aarti Dutt, Nurunnahar Zahur, Ramadatta, Kundaprabha Sen, Mushtari Shafi and others spoke at the meeting. The speakers called for the overthrow of Pakistan's military rule and the establishment of democracy, and called on the women of Chittagong to take part in the movement on the streets, not at home. Later the procession for independence came out (Parveen, 2010). Inspired by the will of Bangabandhu at that time, Raihana Shafi was appointed the president of the railway branch of the Awami League and worked in the railway colony and Sramik Para in the early days of the movement. In this work, Dr. Nurunnahar Zahur encouraged him (Rahim, 1978).

A women's meeting was held in Chittagong on 21 March 1971 under the chairmanship of Begum Umratul Fazl. At the meeting, Begum Sufia Kamal said that women should be ready to face any situation in the current struggle. He added that meetings and processions are not enough for the target people, they need courage, mental preparation and motivation. He called upon the women community to break all ties and jump into the struggle and receive training (Sen, 1976). Saleha Chowdhury of Chittagong expressed her displeasure over not convening a session of the National Assembly during the turbulent days of the mass

movement. Outraged members of the Mahila Parishad and Bandhabi Sangha under his leadership organized protest meetings and rallies. He actively participated in all these activities and became disgusted with the military rule of Pakistan (Rashid, 1987).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Rajshahi**

On 20 March 1971, a women's gathering was held in the auditorium of the Sonar Bangla Patrika office in Rajshahi. At the rally, Mrs. Jahanara Kamruzzaman, president of the local Awami League's Sangram Parishad, said, "While our children are dying from bullets, we mothers and sisters could not sit within the four walls of the house." (Parveen, 2010, p.56). Speakers at the meeting called upon the women society of Rajshahi to continue the movement together with the student workers and peasants till the final victory of the freedom movement is achieved. At the end of the rally a huge procession of women was taken out. During the procession, slogans were raised highlighting the differences between the military rulers of Pakistan (Mujamder, 1989).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Narayanganj**

On 4 March 1971, a huge women's rally and demonstration was held in Narayanganj to protest the adjournment of the National Assembly and the massacre and to demand the complete liberation of the country. Thousands of women participated in it. The women who joined the protest march vowed to continue the movement on the streets until the country gained independence (Hossain, 1962).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Nabiganj**

In support of the non-cooperation movement, a procession of women came out at the call of Miss KananBala Biswas, the

female secretary of Nabiganj Union Awami League. The women participating in the procession protested with bash sticks, brooms, pots, swords and spears. At the end of the procession, Mrs. Kanon Bala Biswas expressed her determination to continue the movement till the independence of Bengal was achieved (Mankekar, 1976).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Khulna

On 14 March 1971, a meeting and procession of mothers and sisters was organized in Khulna on the initiative of Mahila Awami League and Mahila Chhatra League in support of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of Bengal. This was the first procession of women in Khulna (Parveen, 2010). Hundreds of women from various remote areas, including the Khalishpur and Daulatpur industrial areas, wearing burqas, many joined the procession with their babies in their arms (Razia, 1981). At the end of the procession, they attended a meeting on Hadith Pak and took a solemn oath that if another shot was fired in Khulna, the mothers and sisters would leave the kitchen and take to the streets and the call was made to the men and women of Bangladesh to continue the struggle till the final victory (Gupta, 1978).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Jessore

In March 1971, Raushan Jahan Sathi of Jessore organized students as women leaders in the non-cooperation movement and involved people from different walks of life in the mass movement. He continued his movement on the highways till the independence of Bangladesh was won (Ahmed, 1985). Saleha Begum of Jessore actively participated during the non-cooperation movement. She was involved in arms training management, training, arms procurement, propaganda campaigns, preparation for the war of independence,

etc. for the women of Jessore. He chose the garden house of Nazir Shankarpur Rashid for weapons training. There he trained about 200 women of the district in weapons. His training was conducted by Captain Zahid (Huque, 1991).

On the other hand, Ashrafunnesa, a woman leader of the district, formed a baton force of about 600 women. These battalions marched from Jessore to Dhaka on 7 March to support Bangabandhu's speech to the nation and on 7 March were inspired by Bangabandhu's declaration of independence and prepared to fight with arms. Ashrafunnesa convened an all-party meeting at Jessore Railgate on March 25. The meeting was attended by various political parties in Jessore. The political parties pledged to maintain communal harmony during the war (Shafiullah, 1989).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Cumilla

Like other districts of Bangladesh, the women community of Cumilla district jumped into the non-cooperation movement. In response to the call of Miss Mumtaz Begum, countless women of Cumilla city took to the streets. When the 23rd Joy Bangla Bahini was formed, he led it and provided rifle training to the women. Under her leadership, she started a house-to-house women's movement in Cumilla (Bhattacharjee, 1972).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Brakshanbaria

At the call of women leader Mamtaz Begum in Kasba area of Brakshanbaria district, women took to the streets in support of non-cooperation. They take part in procession meetings. Women's forces were formed in the neighborhoods. These women received weapons training. Mumtaz Begum organized women and trained them to create public opinion in the liberation war, to wield weapons and to provide first aid (Jahan, 20 November, 1997).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Patuakhali

After the non-cooperation movement spread in Patuakhali district at the beginning of March. The movement, led by district women's leader Monowara Begum, was attended by men as well as women of different levels. Responding to his call, the school-college students united and joined the movement. They go from house to house to collect money for the management of the movement. The military government of Pakistan has issued arrest warrants for General Yahya Khan Monowara Begum District College students. But keeping in mind the government warrant, she led the movement with the women of the district (Begum, 24 May, 1997).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Barisal

Begum TaibunNahar Rashid of Daulat Khan police station in Barisal district was the company commander of Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia and Barisal districts. In 1969, he joined politics at the instigation of Bangabandhu (Nesha,17 March,1997).

During the non-cooperation movement in March 1971, she gave weapons training to the women of the district and at the end of the training, she and her team gave Bangabandhu the Guard of Honor. On 29 March 1971, the women of Barisal organized a meeting at the local district student league office. Mrs. Sakhina Islam presided over the meeting. Speakers of the meeting called upon all to lead a non-cooperation movement and a united movement for the establishment of independence (Parveen, 2010).

## Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Farajganj

On 19th March 1971 at 5 pm a meeting of women was held at Rampur Girls School with the initiative of Farajganj Union Women's Awami League. Mrs. Hasna gave speeches by women from

different levels of the district under the chairmanship of Hena Sikder. The speakers all called on women to work for independence. At the end of the meeting, a women's council was formed by convening Mumtaz Shamsul Haque (Loshak, 1971).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Noakhali**

On 18 March 1971, a meeting of local women was held at Noakhali Maizdi Kot under the chairmanship of Nurun Nahar Rashid. At the meeting, he appealed to all, regardless of party affiliation, to support Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Bengal independence movement. In response to his call, the school-college students of the district took part in the spontaneous movement (Ittephaka, 23 March, 1971).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Sylhet**

On the 16th day of the non-cooperation movement, a procession of women came out in the city at 9 am on the initiative of Sylhet Mahila Parishad. The procession went around the city. At 4 pm on the same day, another procession came out on the initiative of the women's wing of the Awami League. At the end of the procession, support was given to the program of non-cooperation movement and an oath was taken to continue the movement till independence was won (Parveen, 2010).

**Participation of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement in Dinajpur**

On 19 March 1971, the women of Dinajpur staged a procession in full support of the freedom struggle of the people of Bengal. On the initiative of Awami League Students Union and East Bengal Students Union, women's street meetings are held almost every day with the aim of gaining independence. A

meeting of women was held at the local town hall in support of Bangabandhu in the Bengal independence movement (Ittephaka, 23 March 1971).

The meeting, chaired by Begum Nurun Nahar Rashid, adjourned the National Assembly session on March 3, declaring the mass movement to be the only way for the people of Bengal. And from this meeting, she called on women to work in unity in times of crisis in the country. The meeting was convened by Begum Azumand Banu and a 17-member women's council was formed(Parveen, 2010).Then, on 20 March 1971, a meeting of the Dinajpur Women's Association demanded the immediate withdrawal of military rule and the transfer of power to elected representatives. From that meeting, Mrs. Hasina Rahman in her speech condemned the genocide of army members in different parts of the country and demanded justice for the killings. The meeting called for continuing the non-cooperation movement of women in Dinajpur (Daily Pakistan,19 March,1971).

**Conclusion**

East Bengal became a province of Pakistan under the Indian Independence Act of 1947. But even though East Bengal emerged as a province of Pakistan, it remained subjugated. Like the British rulers, the central rulers of Pakistan deprived the people of East Bengal of social, political and economic opportunities. Therefore, the people of East Bengal formed different movements and struggles at different times to realize their rights. Apart from men, women of Bengal also participated in these movements. The non-cooperation movement of Bengalis was very important in the struggle against the government of Pakistan. The participation of women in this movement shook the highways.The non-cooperation movement was transformed into the Bengali independence movement. Men as well as women

of Bengal participated in this freedom movement and wrote glorious chapters. After a long and bloody war of nine months, Bangladesh was able to gain independence. Soit can be said this historic and unprecedented role of Bengali women's society in the non-cooperation movement has become a role model for every exploited and disenfranchised nation.

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# The Posthuman Pedagogy: A Learning Centric Educational Dimension

Siddhartha Dhungana, PhD

The article is based on a thematic analysis of available literature on posthuman educational practices and opportunities. It asserts that the posthuman context does not demoralize human space, but rather strengthens educational practices by going beyond formal and informal education and surpassing teacher-centered or student-centered teaching-learning activities. The article discusses perceptions of the posthuman context in general, as well as common educational practices about the posthuman context. Its primary focus is on posthuman pedagogical considerations and a method to incorporate digital realities as a strength to posthuman pedagogue. It proposes a multisensory pedagogy that incorporates human and nonhuman realities to promote lifelong learning procedures. It also asserts the concept of a diffractive teacher who transforms into a barycentric mass collaborating and functioning in a relational approach.

**Keywords:** Posthuman pedagogy, digital humanism, posthumanism, diffractive pedagogue

## Posthuman Educational Practice: An Introduction

A teacher is a living organism who carries out educational objectives in real-world settings, according to the broader educational realm. As researchers, we believe that the role of the teacher is to connect past and present generations, to transfer social-cultural-

human values, and to equip future generations with skills and knowledge relevant to their future. We have noticed that the world is progressing in artificial intelligence and robotic experiments at this point in new-generation education. Humanists and educators are also concerned about whether it will challenge or replace human intelligence, as well as the space of the human agent in the educational realm. The twenty-first century's debate over such binary realities (i.e., artificial intelligence vs. human intelligence) necessitates a progressive and creative framework. This approach will be a useful synthesis of the best features of both domains, establishing performative and transformative educational practices.

This article focuses on the general debates surrounding posthumanism. Its primary focus will be on posthuman educational concerns and potential pedagogies for future education. Posthumanism has since concentrated on how humans and technologies interact to generate ideas or efficient life performances. Human engagement with emerging technologies for thinking and producing knowledge is the most important concern in posthumanism (Ranisch & Sorgner, 2014). We consider the potential integration conditions and practices that would position a teacher as a key agent for educational practices and technological applications. Various disciplines, including history, philosophy, and literature, recognize that humans can shape and reshape the world structure, with humans and human rationality at the center. The anthropocentric concept, however, may not apply to educational engagements in today's changing generation. We have discovered, as English language educators, that educational practice in applied linguistics, which is thought to exist alongside history, philosophy, and literature, focuses on the central role of human language in human relations (Pennycook, 2018). With the presence of posthumanism, whether in the form of digital humanism or the extreme concept of transhumanism, such an anthropocentric viewpoint is challenged. It rejects the notion that "man is the measure

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of all things," instead viewing digital artifacts and human beings as the world's dual essence. Such dual world system components necessitate additional academic research to provide a relational formation between technologies and humans for the future (Philbeck, 2014). This article examines the future world through the lens of posthuman influences in educational sectors, focusing on pedagogy and pedagogical practices. I have used posthumanism, digital humanism, and digital humanities as interconnected codes to refer to the posthuman context in this discussion.

**Posthuman Discourse**

Discussions about entering a changing phenomenal reality frequently defy conventional practices. On the other hand, the change is intended to push human practices forward. We've noticed that change always draws on past strengths and creates a sense of change in practice for advancements. So, while debating the contents of the posthuman era, we cannot ignore humanism's conceptual framework. In conjunction with this framing, Ranisch and Sorgner (2014) discuss how the German theologian and philosopher Friedrich I. Niethammer coined the term humanism (Humanismus) in 1808 in the context of educational curricula, as it is derived from the Latin word humanitas. Thus, humanism is inextricably linked to educational practices that care for and share the humanistic essence in every generation. It has shaped and reshaped educational practices in favor of human fulfillment in the future. Humanistic psychology impacted education in the 1970s and 1980s, causing a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered educational practices. It is still influential in language teaching and learning because communicative language learning is a product of human-centered psychology (Ranisch & Sorgner, 2014). The question now is whether the posthuman context, with its emphasis on technologies, demoralizes future generations' educational needs and practices. While discussing posthuman applied

linguistics, Pennycook (2008) states that posthumanism is not about abandoning humans or proclaiming the end of humanity; instead, it is about rethinking the relationship between humans and the rest of the world. It has not challenged traditional educational practices, but it is attempting to integrate human and nonhuman agents for better practice consolidation in the education system. It indicates the need to reconsider human-centric essentialism in education, as digital accessibility has emerged to change educational phenomena far and wide.

Digital humanism is a subset of posthuman consciousness that manifests itself as a discursive artifact that does not explain knowledge but transparently demonstrates something else that may convey knowledge (Ramsay & Rockwell, 2012). The primary dimension of digital humanities is the interaction of human agents with nonhuman agents, such as ecology and technology. In the process of integrating humans, ecology, and technology in educational practice, considering whole technology as a tool or part of the education system has been/can be debated. Ramsay and Rockwell debate the feasibility of using digital humanities as a traditional theoretical tool. Since they believe that digital humanities serve as a foundation for research explanation rather than as an explanation for research phenomena, this consideration assumes the necessity of incorporating nonhuman agents into educational practices. As a coexisting phenomenon, this integration in the posthuman context necessitates its application in education, research, and the knowledge industry. Because scholarship or pedagogy is explicit in the educational system, we see the digital humanities debate as an academic concern. It introduces various academic practices to which "we are generally unaccustomed" with such infrastructure that forces us to go deeper and "live an active, 24-7 life online" for an academic cause. It aspires to be a human agent capable of utilizing technology. We can see it as socially responsible

pedagogy and scholarship because it has been "working together, sharing research, arguing, competing, and collaborating for many years" in advanced ways to bring humans together in academic forums (Kirschenbaum, 2012; Matthew, 2012). Recent practices have improved their performance in the global educational system. To consolidate posthuman concepts and put them into practice, a willingness to reframe human-centric assumptions is required so that posthuman pedagogy can align local needs with global practices. By emphasizing the importance of collaboration in digital framing, the discussion will convey a posthuman context fact.

In academia, digital humanism is proposed as a reconciling element to reconfigure and reform the global divide created in the name of 'globality' as the formation of a homogenized global community.' Such globality is seen as a rotten formation created by "neocapitalists/neocolonialists" that can be corrected and readjusted with equal identities in human society by accepting digital humanities as a friend (Sarce, 2019). It implies that the issue of digitized practices may compel us to fall under global aspiration and contribute to the development of local realities while promoting human-nonhuman integrated academic practice. This debate considers the possibility of incorporating technology's influence into human identity, as integration is a progressive prelude to the future world. It determines existence in the context of local and global realities and human and nonhuman integration. Transhumanism and posthumanism have attempted to contribute to techno-human integration by mediating us in our daily lives, allowing us to access the world, and extending our potentiality with additional skills in the present context. It is unclear whether social concern focuses on memes or group influences; however, posthumanism is moving forward to connect all aspects of human identity as an integral component (Ranisch & Sorgner, 2014). The goal is to integrate technological components with human efficiencies into a global system, which will result in advancements

in human and nonhuman existence. Educational practice is the best way to reframe attitudes, skills, and practices in reality as posthuman age aspirations. It necessitates that the academic sector considers technological realities and their contribution to shrinking global space through the assembly of local connectivity.

It is assumed that ordinary human capabilities will not be able to make it possible because human knowledge and intellect require the assistance of supporting agencies in order to bring about implacable practices. These organizations are typically the result of recent advanced practices that have demonstrated transformation in worldly realities. Transhumanism is now recognized as an academic value in addition to technological behavior. According to Philbeck (2014), transhumanism is a position that advocates for a radical transformation of human biological aptitudes and social conditions through the use of technology. Technologies shape human and social conditions by serving as instrumental values in posthuman identities. Posthumanism has questioned anthropocentric knowledge, ethics, action, and intention, as well as human arrogance, human minds, and human relationships to other creatures and objects in the universe (Pennycook, 2018). It does not aspire to surpass human-fabricated social and academic values, as Pennycook argued on the goal of posthuman reality, not as an intention for a world without humans, nor does it assert that language and literacy could take place without humans.

Furthermore, he emphasized that posthuman agency aspires to restructure and rebalance human centrality norms to bring in the more-than-human world. As a result, in posthuman discourse, we move beyond human concerns to bring relational content from existing and emerging phenomena such as digital realities, socio-cultural realities, and ecological content. Pennycook (2018) and Ceder (2019) have fully justified posthumanism as a shift in how humans think about themselves and their responsibilities to others. Others in this context refer to ecological beings and digital objects.

The posthuman position has shifted away from the individualistic self and self-interest. Posthuman discourse has thus elaborated and expanded the context for identifying the technological means for relational performances acting from and for human and nonhuman agents.

**Educational Concern in Posthuman Context**

In general, we find that a digital phenomenon plays a significant role. These components keep us more frequently engaged in this posthuman context. In the digital phenomenon, academic existence is widely accepted. In this regard, one of the digital humanities groups advocated to the digital humanities community that as a responsible human being, one must use digital technology creatively to advance research and teaching in education. They also claimed that in times of crisis, the digital humanities help sustain academic life because academic life is directly engaged in generating alternatives (Gold, 2012). Academicians investigate hybrid or multimodal features in the search for alternatives for educational and academic practices in the posthuman context. Since then, traditional humanities have been abstractly mixed and intertwined with computational and systematic orders and processes of technology. There is a need for open-mindedness to accept "deferentializations" that are visible and plausible in the presence of digital realities to adapt and develop "better ways to teach and educate" youths for the Future (Sarce, 2019). In this posthuman context, education for the future looks to more research-oriented practices to be adaptive to multiple realities. Posthuman practice-based research is more concerned with unraveling discursiveness in human and nonhuman assemblages than discovering the underlying episteme (Charteris & Nye, 2019). Since digital humanities contextualize the multidimensional values of education concerning human and more-than-human features, this article projects educational concerns with their discursive practices

as pedagogical assumptions in a posthuman context and redefines posthuman pedagogue.

## Pedagogical Assumptions in Posthuman Context

The posthuman context propelled educational alternatives that went beyond existing anthropocentric educational practices. By revisiting humanism's norms and limitations, as well as reframing educational pedagogy to incorporate relationships between ecological beings, machines, and phenomenal things of human life; and by exploring ever-changing new dimensions in educational practices, from curriculum to pedagogy, it is possible to use posthumanism to transform educational thought, practice, and research (Snaza, et. al, 2014). In this vein, Baofu (2011) discusses a heterodox theory of education in order to meet beyond human-centric educational practices in a posthuman context. Furthermore, Baofu proposes four concentrations while developing heterodox educational practices for use in a posthuman context. The emphasis is on developing perspective by combining mind, nature, society, and culture to maintain human presence while expanding perspectives. Second, it is a continuous progressive element because it is not based on a specific theory and does not bolster its strength by incorporating other theoretical norms. Third, it aspires to transcend teacher-centered and student-centered educational practices, so that education becomes dialectic content shared by all parties involved for everyone to collaborate. Finally, incorporating 16 major principles from various knowledge domains exemplifies a more dynamic approach to education (Baofu, 2011). We will not go into detail about the principles; however, the central assumption is that we will go beyond the traditional mode of education by redefining research methodology and educational practice.

It is based on 'diffraction,' which is fundamentally opposed to reflexivity; educational research methodology in the posthuman

context does not proceed with reflexivity. Diffraction differs from reflexivity. Diffraction explores new patterns and ideas for every moment in the present context through entanglement and intra-actions, whereas reflexivity focuses on self-interactive modules for recent actions. The educational practice tends to gather potential reforming agencies for effecting change and advancement. It evolves as a result of entanglement with phenomenal realities, i.e. the presence of socio-cultural, ecological, and technological presence over contextualized practices. In this sense, methodological entanglement grows while human concern is maintained alongside digital and nonhuman contents that promote intra-actions. There is an intra-action between human and nonhuman agents as a single entity to advance educational progress.

Critics argue about educational research pedagogy by using the metaphor of diffraction for thinking methodology and adhering to a posthuman understanding of entanglement (Ceder, 2019). It demonstrates how dynamics in a posthuman pedagogical approach are reconsidered as intra-actions that contextualize educational practice. In the case of applied linguistics, Pennycook (2018) asserts that questions raised in applied linguistics about our understanding of language, humans, objects, and agency contribute to posthuman pedagogy by reframing understanding aspects for appropriate educational purposes.

By discussing linguistic assumptions, we can process the posthuman pedagogical consideration. Since then, language learning has evolved into deeper "semiotic assemblages" with sensory engagements in the broadest sense. When we speak of sensory engagements, we acknowledge the presence of multiple realities in front of our awareness. Posthuman consideration grows pedagogically by broadening the concept of perception in multiple realities with the concept of "attunements" for understanding with "adjustments, interpretations, connections, affiliations, and

adaptations" within human, other-than-human, and object dimensions (Pennycook, 2018). Pennycook describes it as a challenge to human-centric language learning, which holds that the human brain codes and decodes language use to foster learning capabilities. He claimed that if we look forward in local language practices, we will see an assemblage that grows with sensory enactments and attunements while connecting and interacting with multiple phenomenal realities. He also emphasized that critical applied linguistics faces challenges in navigating the context of humans in a posthuman world, which includes an ecological approach to language and relations to objects (Pennycook, 2018). It emphasizes the importance of aligning human and nonhuman realities by adapting educational practice to the needs of the posthuman context. We can discuss such a multimodal approach to rethinking pedagogical practice, which has resulted in an applicable posthuman pedagogy known as flipped class: a collaborative pedagogical practice involving human and technological efforts.

In flipped classes, technology connects out-of-class and in-class activities. Because students practice the instructional directions and materials at home or in their spare time using technological resources, in-class activities become more productive, interactive, and personalized. It is defined by Bergmann and Sams (2015) as an achievement above and beyond ordinary anticipation in which a learner becomes dynamic by engaging in a short video instructional activity at home and descriptive interactions with productive tasks in the classroom. It provides more group and individual attention so that participants benefit; it is also interesting and flexible in order to engage them. Its adaptability expands learners' opportunities to learn at their own pace and in their own space; however, there is some concern about involving each learner in a different context for interactive sessions because they find materials and content in their own

space (Sit & Gu, 2019). It liberates them from teacher-centred and student-centric ideas by allowing them to use their free time to explore content resources teachers provide in their online system.

According to Bergmann and Sams (2012), the classroom is a personalized space for teachers to deal with the personal learning issues of learners with content. Students use the classroom to engage in interactive group discussions. Bergmann and Sams, as teachers, highlight the demand of a few students who asked them to create an individual support system for their students, such as one who could not attend regular class, another who is a slow learner, and another who requires extra input for their individualized learning situations. The teachers devise a solution by incorporating technology that provides content for home practice and restructures the classroom space to support those students who require conceptual clarity on an individual basis. As posthuman technologies have begun multisensory (using all sense perceptions) teaching-learning activities, the dynamism in flip class, a different educational pedagogy, has made educational practices more effective. It is common knowledge that by stimulating multisensory perceptions in teaching-learning activities, we can achieve more profound understanding and beneficial learning (The Open University, 2020). It demonstrates that posthuman pedagogy can contribute to a more flexible and interesting learning process and that human agents can work productively with technologies.

As stated in a UNESCO report (2015), the use of technology in education can develop students' lifelong learning competencies by providing them with learning opportunities anywhere, anytime, and anyway. It is possible by going beyond the constraints of formal and informal educational practices. Baofu (2011) elaborates on the need for formal and informal pedagogical practices to be transcended as transformative educational practices for the future. He proposes four different educational practices: the first is more illustrative and

less exhaustive online education; the second is virtual education by allowing information to be uploaded into the brain via technological advancements; and the third is holistic education in accordance with the future evolutions of the mind in relation to perception, conception, imagination,  intuition, emotions, and behaviors; and finally, spiritual education is needed to sustain human agents as well as their responsibility to the environment and other nonhuman agents. It clearly shows that there are practices and opportunities to shift educational pedagogy in the posthuman context for a better future educational system in the local and global arena. The focus is on a pedagogue who collaborates with technological advancements to ensure the success of posthuman pedagogy.

**Posthuman pedagogue**

The discussion begins with apprehension about a teacher's professional viability in a posthuman world. Artificial intelligence, a product of posthuman consciousness, has challenged the professional space for teachers. The teacher has become inactive as a result of the development of various feasible technological and machinery devices that are rich in educational resources. Nonetheless, the report Innovating Pedagogy 2020 criticizes such assumptions, claiming that the presence of artificial intelligence will assist teachers in improving their teaching abilities. It argues for the preservation of unique human characteristics such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills, which can be instilled in teachers and students through teacher-facing artificial intelligence applications (The Open University, 2020). As a result, teachers must be willing to adopt and implement multisensory practices and technologies. This digital humanities pedagogy concept strengthens teachers' positions by integrating humanities and computational technologies and providing teachers with digital methodologies to transform and improve teaching (Sit & Gu, 2019).

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The debate over the human-teacher position continues; however, the need for transforming education through teachers is essential. Murris (2018) discusses the possibility of integrating the role of the teacher, who represents culture as a human, with an analogy of a heron representing nature. The posthuman context has blurred the nature/culture divide, allowing ecological, human, and material homology to function as a diffractive teacher. The diffractive teacher adds the individualized existence of subjects and objects to generate new thoughts and ideas for the present and future. There have been discussions about posthuman teachers being cyborgs or zombies; however, a posthuman teacher is passionate about adopting and integrating learning resources (Cook, 2016). Learning resources can be found as entanglements in both human and nonhuman spaces. Entanglements bring together human and nonhuman agents, with a teacher serving as a major agent in assembling resources as an integral part of the educational environment. It is all about collapsing binaries, which is a kind of confluence that integrates multiple realities as a homogeneous essence to impart progressive education; for this, we require a pedagogue who can play the role of more-than-human.

In the anthropocentric educational paradigm, the role of a pedagogue differs from that of a typical teacher. Posthuman pedagogy is defined by Cooks (2016) as "barycentric pedagogy," in which human bodies are portrayed as heavenly bodies due to their "gravitational pull." As a mass, such a human body possesses a "mixture of knowledge, skills, and abilities" that can entice another mass in intra-action negotiation. As they continue to orbit one another, the heavenly bodies become the center of one another in this barycentric pedagogical process. Cooks claims that teachers and students form a mass by combining their skills, knowledge, and abilities. It continues to innovate a pedagogy in which teachers and students collaborate to assemble educational practices in a

super system. In search of reformulating educational pedagogy, the posthuman teacher integrates within the mass of learners and follows barycentric pedagogy, which has two attributes: distributed and reflexive natures to be adopted in an ever-changing educational process. To sustain distributed and reflexive natures throughout the educational system, the teacher becomes an agent of barycentric pedagogy. According to Cooks, in barycentric pedagogy, a posthuman teacher moves in the orbits of consciousness, unconsciousness, bodies, technologies, the environment, objects, and other (post) humans to engage in continuous and homogeneous intra-actions for better educational practices.

These debates over the posthuman pedagogue, whether as a teacher with and for a multisensory pedagogy, a diffractive teacher to stop binary and bring forth intra-actions in learning mechanisms, or a barycentric teacher who works with the available systems as integral parts of conscious and unconscious entities, all bring hope for the future of education. Since then, Chithra (2019) has argued that teachers perform technologically augmented learning processes that are "distinctly learner-oriented," thereby altering the overall educational paradigm. The future of education will be entirely focused on learning, with human and nonhuman agents, contents, and contributions.

## Conclusion

The posthuman context and relevant educational transformations were discussed in this article using the concepts of posthuman pedagogy and a posthuman pedagogue. Knowledge, teacher, and student have been prioritized as three critical components of the education system, which have been implemented through various methodological adaptations. We discovered the existence of formal and informal educational practices, as well as teacher-centric and student-centric practices. As a result, a

number of methodological approaches to making language learning communicative and functional emerged. Nonhuman agents were only used as a tool in these adaptations, so students were prepared to take on anthropocentric tasks. Nonetheless, technological advancements have brought the issues of ecological existence and technological access into academic discourse as equally important realities. Because technology is so intertwined with educational practices, educational discourse cannot create a discourse on educational advancements while ignoring digital realities. Posthuman pedagogy aims to integrate human and nonhuman agents into educational practices to enrich and focus learning by engaging in multiple resources. In posthuman education, three characteristics must be considered: a) Posthuman education is possible with more-than-human attributes and an assemblage of human and nonhuman realities; b) posthuman education has a relational quality as intra-actions; and c) the posthuman pedagogue functions as 'barycentric,' avoiding binary positions of teacher/student focus. Posthuman education's reality and future projection is the integration of technologies, resulting in more profound and effective multisensory educational practices. Based on this, it is a claim that posthuman educational practice is not about suspending the human space, but it is all about integration of and responding to a relational approach to multiple phenomenal realities to bring diffraction in teaching and training and equipping a pedagogue from such limelight. More research on perceptions and practices of educational advancements in the posthuman context is required to make human and nonhuman agents adequately integrate into the educational system.

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# Dissonance Between Internal Migration and Citizenship Rights in Nepal

Binayak Krishna Thapa, PhD & Sagar Raj Sharma, PhD

This paper discusses the issues pertaining to internal migration and citizenship regulations for people in Nepal, especially those concerning the vital registration rights of the citizens and their free movement across administrative boundaries. The data for this purpose is based on field work conducted in the district headquarters of Bhojpur in Eastern Nepal, where temporary migrants that had come from remote villages were interviewed. The authors delves into exploring how temporary migrants are facing exclusion from membership to self-help group and user committees which is looked upon as lack of citizenship rights conferred to them by the state. It is seen that free mobility does not always amount to extension and enhancement of citizenship rights, and, through the practice of free movement, migrants without migration registrations have been getting lesser access to social rights and civil and political entitlements.

## Introduction

This paper discusses the issues pertaining to internal migration and citizenship regulations for people in Nepal, especially those concerning the vital registration rights of the citizens and their free movement across administrative boundaries. Let us first explain what a vital registration means. Vital registration is a basic

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means to acquire native belongingness for a person at the local level which may be in rural Municipality or Municipality in Nepal. Vital registration involves birth registration, marriage registration, divorce registration, death registration, and migration registration, all of which are essential to have for citizens of Nepal. Civic status in Nepal, as in many other countries, is ascribed and inherited which starts from birth registration. An individual's access to welfare services is determined on the basis of where this registration is done. Where a person is born does have a major impact upon his life chances, and a localized registration is not subject to change by the individual's will or desire.

In Nepal's case, an individual's civic status is regulated by the Personal Event Act (1976), according to which, civic status of an individual remains assigned at birth, and is inherited. The rights and entitlements devolving from such civic status are linked to the location and place of birth of a person at the time of registration. However, upon migration, only when a person acquires a 'migration registration certificate' - does he get the entailed rights and entitlements due to her/him transferable in her/his new destination. In the absence of this certificate these rights are anchored and bound to the location and place of her/his birth registration.

The civic status discussed here is consistent with the generally accepted understanding of the concept of national citizenship. Carens (1992) defines national citizenship as "a lot like feudal status in the medieval world. It is assigned at birth, for the most part it is not subject to change by the individual's will and effort; and it has a major impact upon that person's life chances". In this regard, citizenship is an affiliation anchored to a particular boundary and entails substantial rights (social, economic, political) within the concerned boundary. In Nepal, municipalities are administrative boundaries. Free movement across these boundaries is practiced by citizens without any barriers. Within this context, understanding of

located registration affiliation entailed social rights and entitlement, and its transferability upon mobility is meaningful and will offer new and interesting perspectives on internal migration and citizenship issues in Nepal.

In this paper, we examine the implication of local affiliation on the social rights of internal migrants. For this purpose, we consider affiliation to the administrative unit of a municipality and limit our analysis to social rights and social citizenship dimensions. We argue that although social rights have inter-linkages with civil and political rights in complex ways, free mobility does not always amount to extension and enhancement of citizenship rights. The cases and examples studies in this paper show that through the practice of free movement across municipality borders, migrants without migration registration have been getting lesser access to social rights and civil and political entitlements.

## Conceptualizing Internal Migration and Citizenship

We follow the conceptualization by Kovacheva et. al.(2012), who categorizes migration of people across the political borders of a nation-state as international migration and migration of people within the administrative boundaries of a nation-state as internal migration. In consistency with the existing literature, we see the relation between a nation-state and an individual to be defined by citizenship and conceptualize citizenship as the legal affiliation of the individual with the state (Baubock, 2009; Naujoks, 2009; Kovacheva et al., 2012). In doing so we attempt to unpack and disintegrate citizenship in order to understand the concept of 'universal citizen' better with rights to participate in institutions of governance or those of state for an individual (Chatterjee, 2010). This relationship between the nation-state and an individual was also recognized by Marshall in 1950, who defined it as the 'status bestowed on those who are full members of a community [...] all who possess the status

are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed'. Thus, citizenship, defined as a relationship or affiliation between the state and the citizen, entails rights and responsibilities, with membership conferred on every member of the concerned nation-state. It is this membership element of citizenship that carries immense constraints to practice full citizenship rights for mobile people during migration across local, national and international borders and territories in Nepal.

This section focuses on internal administrative boundaries of a nation- state that will be generally porous to internal movement of people. This raises the question  regarding the 'equal rights for all members' in conditions when migrants are at a separate destination while their first membership is anchored in the administrative boundary of their origin. It is to be noted that all types of conceptualization concerning citizenship have the nation-state as a reference point that entails legal affiliation to that administrative boundary as well as the  bundle of rights associated with it that follows it (Baubock, 2006). As a legal affiliation to a defined administrative territory it ascribes civic identity to such a person that commences at birth  and ceases at his death. Through this definition, a person may have a relationship with the state at different levels. For example, in Nepal, one can have this relationship defined  at a higher level, i.e. citizenship at the national level, and at a lower level, i.e.at the administrative unit level ( Municipality) as well. The vital registration system of Nepal requires that every Nepali citizen gets registered with the concerned municipal authority at birth. With this birth registration, he inherits his permanent resident location status through the head of his household to which he belongs. This provides a civic status to the person  that we call as ascribed and inherited. During migration, such a person takes this affiliation with him. However, once the migrants settle in a new administrative territorial unit of the state, several questions arise; for example, a)

How can these migrants reacquire their affiliation in a new place? b) What happens to their old affiliation? c) And what implication does it have for their other vital registrations? To answer these questions we have used the concept of 'local citizenship' as an analytical term corresponding to the idea of affiliation at the lower level of the administrative territorial unit for these migrants.

The significance of citizenship affiliation relates to rights that are entailed with it. Nepali citizenship at both national and local levels provides a specific set of rights to each person within the concerned territory. The general rights common to both levels are the rights to move, to reside and to work. To better understand these rights, particularly the rights associated with lower level affiliation, it is important to discuss the social dimension of citizenship, i.e., social citizenship, which, as Marshal (1950) mentions it, is such a citizen's right to a share in the economic wealth of a political unit. The institutions most closely related with social citizenship for the Nepalese citizens are the municipalities. The social dimensions of it imply the social services and welfare benefits provided to them through these institutions. This dimension of citizenship is particularly relevant when migrants move from lower-benefit to higher-benefit administrative units, more generally from rural to urban administrative units. As we discuss below, for those who move from one place to another, migration registration is important, as this affects that person's social entitlements. In this context, what one needs to remember is that those who move and exercise their right to free movement may stand to endanger their other social rights.

**Civic Status and Citizenship**

With the possession of citizenship of a nation-state, individuals are conferred juridical status and a political identity. Citizenship entails acquiring of different civil, social and political rights. With these rights and given entitlements, it enables citizens to

be members of a nation-state where they can actively participate in all meaningful matters governing their lives (Pant and Standing, 2011). In Nepal too, citizenship is a relationship between an individual and the State. Citizenship certificate is an identity document that proves a person to be a member of the nation-state, and hence a proof of his being a Nepali citizen. It means that the possession of a citizenship certificate for a citizen lies in his exercising various rights, claims and social benefits.

In the Nepalese context, the concept of citizenship was introduced in 1952 after the enactment of the Nepal Citizenship Act (FWLD, 2014). Since then, the government has been issuing citizenship certificates as a formal document to all those who have reached the age 16 or above. The citizenship certificate not only grants a person his legal identity but also provides him access to a number of rights, opportunities and services that includes formal sector employment, micro-credit schemes and banking facilities for him. It gets him his birth registration, marriage and death certificates, secures him his proof of migration, property transaction, government benefits and allowances, and similar other provisions. For obtaining the citizenship certificate, the official process is that the applicant must produce documents relating to the land registration or citizenship certificate already held by members of his immediate family, given to them by their municipality secretary. The person eligible for membership of the municipality will first have to approach his/her concerned Municipality with the required documents to get recommendation for citizenship certificate (FWLD, 2014). This recommendation, along with other required documentation, is then submitted to the District Coordination Office (DCO) and on the basis of it the Chief District Office (CDO) makes the final decision to grant or reject the application for citizenship.

Granting of citizenship currently prevalent in Nepal is static in model, and makes it paradoxical in character and quality. For

example, a person from a rural area possessing citizenship cannot actualize the same level of citizenship rights upon migration to a town or city different from his origin. His / her citizenship is primarily affiliated to the Municipality where he originally belongs and it is within the administrative boundary of this Municipality that she/ he can actualize the full potential of his/her citizenship rights due to a member of the state.

**Methods**

This study used open-ended interviews and participant observation methods for gathering primary data. A case study approach was adopted to acquire in detail the actual experiences undergone by a migrant in exercise of her/his citizenship privileges in public domains, namely the ward citizen forums, the self-help groups and the municipality- the principal local institution in which local people participate in their day to day activities. We held interviews of permanent and temporary migrant residents, municipality officials and local leaders in diverse sectors like education, health, and business. Regular observations were also made of the workings of the municipality office during the working hours of the municipality. In total 34 in-depth interviews were taken of migrant households, and two cases out of ten generated themes were selected. The field work was conducted during 16th of September, 2017 to 27th of Feb, 2018. The unit of analysis for the two cases present is household.

**Introducing the Study Site: Bhojpur Municipality**

Bhojpur district falls in the eastern development region of Nepal. This middle-hill district located almost in the middle of the development region is river-locked between two large rivers, Arun River to the east, and Sunkoshi River in the south. Bhojpur's score of 0.479 on the Human Development Index was lower to the

national average of 0.490 in 2014 (UNDP, 2014). Compared to the surrounding districts of the region, Bhojpur's infrastructure (such as roads, electricity, schools and medical facilities) is less developed.

The district population is multi-ethnic and varied, ranging across different caste groups. The majority of its inhabitants belong to the Rai ethnic group, followed by different 'hill castes' and other minor ethnic groups, such as the Newars and the Tamangs. They all share a patrilineal and patrilocal family structure in common. As in other parts of Nepal as mentioned in Poertner et al ( 2011), Thieme and Muller Böker (2010) and , Thieme, Kollmair and  Muller- Böker, (2003),  it is woman who leaves her native home called 'maiti' after marriage and goes to settle in her in-law's house known as 'ghar' permanently,  discharging all  domestic and  agricultural work of her new household. All ethnic and caste groups are also characterized by a tight relational and kinship network structures that provide a supportive backdrop for them during  migration.

Bhojpur municipality, the headquarters of the Bhojpur district, is our primary research site for this study.  On May 16, 2014, Bhojpur and the four surrounding Village Development Committee (VDC) were formally upgraded to a Municipality, which came into operation on July 17 the same year. In this study we use the term 'Municipality' as an analytical unity and our study area. In the last decade, considering 2001 as the baseline, Bhojpur Municipality has become a popular destination for migrants coming from other VDCs of the district. So, the municipality has seen a remarkable growth in its population and in the number of its households. As per the census of 2001, the total population of Bhojpur municipality was 5,881 people, living  in 1428 households, whereas in the census of 2011 population growth in it was seen to be  7,446, spread over  2070 households. As this district has recorded the lowest population growth rate in comparison to other districts of Nepal in the last two decades, its population growth in the 2011 census certainly is to be attributed to in-migration.

**Scenario of Internal Migration in Bhojpur Municipality**

The internal migration from Bhojpur to other parts of Nepal has a longstanding history. The main determinants of migration for people of lower economic status have mainly been unemployment, lack of natural resources, impoverishment, and personal indebtedness, Whereas for the upper economic strata, the principal drivers of migration have been the lack of facilities and opportunities for investment and wealth accumulation. The decade-long armed conflict and political instability have also triggered out-migration from Bhojpur. In recent years, Bhojpur has experienced a flux of in-migration from its surrounding municipality. Since the construction of a road in 2006 connecting it with Dhankuta district, Bhojpur municipality has witnessed enhanced transportation facilities, access to market for both goods and labour, increase in investment in the housing sector, in the network of roads, and an increase in the number of private schools and hospitals.

These changes in external economic structures have converted Bhojpur municipality from being a place of origin to a destination for migration. Determinants of migration have also changed from those of personal destitution to a greater accessibility to opportunities at the point of destination. The current trend in internal migration has changed from strategies of coping with life to one of actualizing improved livelihood and well-being for the migrant.

**Analysis**

This section presents the two actual cases of migrant households faced by them in the exercise of their legitimate citizenship status. The first relates to the story of an out–migrant household whose enjoyment of citizenship rights at destination was impeded, because their citizenship status remained anchored to the municipality of their origin, and the second case describes an

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in-migrant household whose members experienced an exclusion at their current place of destination.

*Case One: An Out – Migrant Family With Their Citizenship Anchored to the Place of Their Origin*

*Chiran[1], a 48-year old man, is originally from Bhojpur municipality ward number one. His village is Daurali and it is from this ward that he has received his national citizenship certificate. This citizenship from Bhojpur municipality ward number one makes Chiran a formal member of the local political community. From this it implies that he is not a member of any other municipality but this. As a citizen it entitles him no doubt to various rights. The citizenship certificate confirms his legal identity and it provides him access to opportunities and services of various kinds, such as employment in formal sectors, eligibility to micro-credit schemes and banking facilities, claim to birth, marriage, death and migration papers and those relating to property transaction, government benefits and allowances, and other rights.*

Chiran migrated to Kathmandu in the year 2001.Until then he was a teacher in a government school in Daurali. As a teacher, his social status in the village was high. As representative in ward-level meetings, he was a respected member of the local community

> *"I used to attend ward-level meetings. I was an advisor to the ward committee. As a teacher I was encouraged and requested by the people to be the advisor, and I actively participated in decision-making processes for the ward-level development programs. But now I have no stake here as I have migrated to Kathmandu. I am not involved in any ward-level activities here or in Kathmandu because I have not been able to establish myself there...."*

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1        The names of informants used in this chapter are all pseudonyms.

Chiran's formal membership in the local community had provided him public space to participate in the ward level meetings in exercise of his citizenship rights. Being considered an influential person in the community, he could actively use his agency for the betterment of the local community. In his new destination Chiran has not been able to develop any cultural capital or social network in addition to not being able to exercise his normal citizenship rights.

Since his migration to Kathmandu, he lives detached from the place of his origin, and at the same time, he is unable to establish his agency at the same level at his new destination of choice. With this his participation in local level activities has diminished at the new destination as well as at its origin. It's almost ten years since he has been residing in Kathmandu where he migrated in order to provide better education to his daughter and sons. We[2] met Chiran at the municipality office at Bhojpur where he and his daughter had come to procure a Relationship Verification Certificate that can be obtained only from the local registrar. The Relationship Verification Certificate is a legal document that certifies familial relationships between individuals of a household. Such a certificate is required by students who aspire to go abroad for further education. Chiran said he was obliged to travel to Bhojpur repeatedly to obtain such legal documents and other social benefits from Bhojpur . His children had also been given citizenship certificates with recommendations from the same municipality, as it was also the place of their father's origin.

From this, we see an individual's citizenship to be a status in recognition of his legal affiliation to a politically defined territory, which in the case of Chiran is the Bhojpur municipality. Although the generally accepted idea of a person's citizenship to a politically defined territory is the nation-state (Naujoks, 2009), Kovacheva et. al. (2012) argues that a person may hold citizenship privileges at different territorial levels. In China a person can have his affiliation

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2        We in this chapter refers to the authors of this chapter.

both at the central level of the state as well as at lower levels of a particular administrative unit.. In Chiran's case, his citizenship is affiliated at a higher level to the nation-state and at a lower level to the municipality where he was originally registered. Possession of citizenship entails substantial rights, but in Nepal it can be actualized only locally in the concerned administrative unit, never beyond it. Chiran could not obtain a relationship verification certificate from Kathmandu despite the fact that he and his daughter both have citizenship certificates and are entitled to all the rights that citizenship entails. This is where the question arises. Does the free movement practiced by aspirant migrants and mobile people lead to actualizing their fuller set of rights and entitlements due to all citizens, or minimizes it for people who are in migration?

*Case Two: An In-Migrant Family With Excluded Experiences of Their Citizenship Rights*

Chandra (age 19) and Kamala (age 18) are married to each other and have two sons – the older one two years old, and the younger seven months old. Chandra is originally from Diktel, the district headquarters of Khotang district. It is seven years since Chandra has been residing in Palawa Village in ward no. 2 of Bhojpur municipality. In these seven years Chandra has been engaged in different economic activities in Palawa to sustain himself. He was involved in sharecropping with a landowner named Man Bhadur, and next he worked as a labourer ('jyami') at a local hydro-power construction site. Currently he is working in a local brick kiln. Chandra constantly searches for new work as a wage earner, which is not easily available. He and Kamala have rented a room which costs them Rs. 800 per month. His income from labour work is around Rs. 7000 per month which is just about enough to feed his small family.

'Two years back when I knew I was eligible to get citizenship, I visited Bhojpur VDC office to inquire about the process

and criteria for getting citizenship certificate. The VDC secretary told me that I had to go to my concerned municipality in Diktel and get the process started from there, not here. Citizenship certificate was very important for me and my wife, because without it we could neither register our marriage, nor have our son's birth registered. Even though I have spent seven years here and I am disconnected with Bhojpur , my work here does not connect me to this VDC office. The government employees of the municipality asked me not to come to the office, but go back to Diktel for all my official works and benefits '

The case of Chandra brings out certain issues glaringly, arising from anchoring citizenship to one's place of origin. Chandra who is originally from Doorpa village in Cheeridana ward no. 3 of Diktel had no other option but to go back to his place of origin to obtain his legal identity. It has been seven years since Chandra dissociated himself from the place he migrated from. He got married in Bhojpur and his sons were born in Bhojpur, still neither his marriage registration certificate nor his children's birth registration can be processed in Bhojpur.

## Dissonance Between Internal Migration and Citizenship Rights

These two cases glaringly illustrate how anomalies exist between internal migration and citizenship rights, since people like Chandra and Chiran are denied their citizenship certificates for leaving their place of origin. Chandra and Chiran both had to go to their place of origin in order to get their legal citizenship paper. The need to travel to their place of origin each time for getting these vital papers becomes difficult for migrants who are from lower economic status, as travelling and the process of acquiring such legal documents is rather costly. But these are just the smaller parts of the problem related to obtaining citizenship status. At the community level, Chandra experienced more difficulties.

Chandra elaborated how basic things, such as firewood, the main source of fuel in Bhojpur, was hard to acquire for him as he was not a member of the local forest user group or 'Ban Samuha'. Only the bonafide members of the community and the permanent residents of the municipality can be members and participate in such 'samuha' which gives them access to the village community forest for fodders and firewood for their household use.

"I needed firewood, but I had to be admitted first into the Ban Samuha. This, I was not allowed to do, as - the Secretary of the samuha refused me membership into the group, so I do not get free firewood, nor can I cut wood from the community forest. The only alternative left is to buy it. One bundle ('bitto') of firewood costs me Rs. 200, and it lasts for only 4 days. If I get a chance to enter any of the similar local Samuha, I can have access to other benefits, such as a loan at the time of emergency, or get financial help from the members of the group at the time of my need. Even my wife has not got an entry to Aama Samuha (Mothers Group). For people with low economic status like us, entering a samuha is crucial. Our life is filled with uncertainty therefore, because I am from another district".

Chandra and his wife are thus excluded from membership to the various User Groups, one of the most beneficial local institutions. People from the lower economic status can benefit from membership to these local institutions because such membership confers on them the right to material entitlements, such as firewood, water, agricultural inputs, and even financial benefits from various governmental and non-governmental organizations. To be deprived of this and be excluded from the benefits of such user groups is very hard for the economically poor people like Chandra. It implies, to borrow the terms of Marshals (1950), 'lessened citizenship' status to people like Chandra from the perspective of their social rights. It puts a migrant like Chandra's everyday's living and experience of his

social citizenship in greater jeopardy as he is seen by his community people and the local administration where he has chosen to settle in as a non-member of the municipality.

## Territorially Rooted Citizenship

The first case of our analysis depicts that conventional nation-state citizenship granted  to the citizens of Nepal is firmly anchored to a municipality to which a citizen originally belongs. Nepali citizenship right is rooted in  the municipality he or she is born in, and is territorially bound within it. It makes the municipality a place of absolute importance in the question of obtaining citizenship certificates for everyone. The rights, obligations, provisions and entitlements that a citizenship certificate automatically ensures are unchangeably tied to the municipality one originally belongs to. For example, only a person holding the citizenship from a particular municipality is eligible to enjoy the rights and services  a municipality provides.  It is such a  municipality where records of  a person's vital registrations are kept. The most important criterion is that a person is given status of being a formal member only so long as he/she is a permanent resident of that particular municipality. Having a  municipality recommended citizenship certificate alone implies him to be  a formal member of that municipality.

Preuss (1998) argues that a modern state's principle of territoriality, i.e., the physical attachment of a person to a given territory, is not the only sufficient criterion or evaluation of his or her belonging to a society. He elaborates that mobility is a basic fact of human life and individuals are always looking forward to better their life chances and conditions. In this quest, migration is predictable, and frontier crossing movements will remain as a major human activity. Such territorially rooted citizenship regulations in Nepal have generated ambivalent relations between migrating citizens and the local state, generated by their mobility

### Unbecoming Citizens: A Structural Problem

Our second case depicts that Nepali citizenship is linked to the state as underlined by the process for recommending it. Only the recommendation of a municipality can ensure a citizenship certificate to a person. In this arrangement relationship of an individual to the state is vertical in type, i.e. a member of a municipality is automatically also a member of the nation-state. However, since member of a municipality cannot at the same time become a member of another municipality, this can be called a scalar mismatch wherein exercise of membership rights across municipal boundaries are considered separate from the boundary of the nation-state. This challenges the assumption that within the institution of citizenship, all the people of the nation-state are equal citizens. The nation-state is not the only scale basing on which citizenship rights should be constructed or by which its meaning is given (Staeheli, 2003), but it should also take into account those places where an internal migrant is living at a given moment actually.

Aspirations for a better living standard, better opportunities and enhanced income opportunities have been the principal driving force for emigration of people from rural parts of Nepal to towns and cities. Besides aspirations, another reason for an increasing number of migration in Nepal has been a search for better livelihoods. Historically, migration has been a significant feature in the search for better livelihoods for people in the fragile socio-economic and environmental context of the Himalayan middle hills (Hitchcock 1961; MacForlane 1976; Whelpton 2005; and Sharma 2011). Sharma states that hardly any area exists in the hills of Nepal that has remained unaffected by the exodus of young men and women increasingly to regions where comparatively better opportunities are found. Their destinations include areas across the border in India, as well as, in recent decades, various global countries. In this context, the legal status of people in mobility has raised numerous questions in the exercise as well as practice of their citizenship rights. This is because

linking citizenship to an administrative or sub-geopolitical unit puts limitations on these rights that are hard to exercise. The second case too illustrates how a person's primary affiliation to a sub- geopolitical unit can curtailor diminish his/her full citizenship potential.

In this study, we considered both types of Migration, viz. permanent and non-permanent migration. In the records of migration registration at the municipality office of Bhojpur, ninety nine cases of permanent in-migration were registered in comparison to seventy three out-migration (VDC profile, 2011). Out of 2070 number of households in the 2011 census, 822 of them were given out on rent (CBS, 2011). It indicates that the magnitude of non-permanent or temporary migration was much higher in number than that of permanent migration. In permanent migration usually the entire members of the household are seen to migrate, while in temporary migration it could both be individual or entire household migration. The low magnitude in permanent migration was mostly influenced by the fact that it needed to submit such prerequisites as the certificate of ownership of one's plot of land or of the house at the village of origin. For the temporary migrants they could always live in rented houses and land.

## Conclusion

Through this paper we have attempted to understand some of the problems underlying migration in Nepal, betraying a disharmony existing between internal migration and his place of birth to which a migrant is permanently tied up. To highlight this we have narrated the actual hurdles faced by the temporary migrants as they sought to exercise it as a national of a country. Being a citizen and his experiences cannot ever be separated from its context (Desforges et al., 2005). To show it, we have explored the cases of how temporary migrants negotiate their rights of belonging and participation in the new destinations they are living in now, and in what manner their

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temporary migrants' status affects their lives as citizens. Literature (Siim, 2000, Kaber, 2005, Bellamy et. al., 2004; and Lister et. al., 2007) on migration studies have shown how the practice of citizenship needs to be grounded on and contextualized in the specific national, local, social and political contexts.

The two cases studies done by us here exemplify that internal migration in Nepal involves loosening of ties for migrant families in new destinations with the territory of their origin. Their status as temporary migrants keeps them away from involvement in the community affairs of both their original village and their new destinations. Transition from the place of their origin to a new destination is never a smooth experience for the migrants. Furthermore, they have not been able to realize the universal principle of equality rights that citizenship confers on the people of a nation. In both the cases studied by us, while the host community (destination) does accept the physical presence of the newcomers, it is unwilling to accept them and integrate them as full members in their social, economic and cultural lives. Their irrevocable legal affiliation to the administrative territory of origin is still the single most important criterion to give them individual identity and claims of being migrants in Nepal. As a result, people engaged in migration across the territory of their affiliation are excluded from sharing the basic benefits available to the society at large.

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# Dalit Women's Political Participation at the Local Level: Perspectives of Elected Women Representatives in Nepal

Chandra Upadhyay, PhD

Political representation is believed to be a tool to enhance the competency of Dalit women. It is also acknowledged as a factor for the socio-political empowerment and advancement of the communities they represent. However, it is always fascinating to explore what political representation meant to them, why and how they could come to represent, and how consequential and substantial their representation was. This article interprets the construction from the narratives that come through one-to-one interviews with 19 Dalit women in Biratnagar Metropolitan City as the research participants on the status, opportunities and challenges of their political representation at the local level.  After gathering the narratives, the data is discussed to reach the conclusion that political representation can be a gateway to enhance the leadership potential of Dalit women. The research reveals that political representation is taken as a crucial tool for enhancement of their competency and it can support the empowerment of the community one represents, though there are some issues to be addressed with due time and efforts.  Most of the time, a contextual need overcame a Dalit woman's absence of political awareness to enter politics. Lack of prior experience not only constrained their political mobility and advancement but also, in situations, their male colleagues and the ward 'chairman' intimidated them due to their 'politically inexperienced' background. For some others, their own community too was not excited with their election process or their roles at the local government. Higher levels of political socialization and leadership training would be more goal-

oriented. This paper contributes to comprehending the contextual rationale and the status of Dalit women's political representation and creates scope for additional scholarly and political discourse.

**Introduction**

Amid male domination in Nepali politics, the stake of women in local political leadership has increased substantially. Leadership is frequently viewed as a foundation for   boosting participation and representation of Dalit women. However, Dalit women's political representation in Nepal is primarily due to the quota shares reserved constitutionally for women (Paswan, 29 Oct 2017). The question is, whether the elevated number of women in politics significantly impacts policies for the interest, preferences of the women representatives, women in general and the community they represent. A few areas are of general interest while studying Dalit women's political representation in Nepal, which importantly include but are not necessarily limited to: Dalit representation and structural change and community development at the local and national levels; political representation and empowerment of Dalit women, and the quota system and Dalit representation. 50 percent of the seats designated for women at the municipal wards are reserved for Dalit women (MoWCSC, 2020).  Despite the fact that the overall Dalit representation at the leadership level in 2017 was quite low with only 194 ward chairs, 10 heads and 25 deputy heads of the 753 local governments, it was found that Dalit women had significant representation holding a full of 85 percent of the reserved seats for Dalit women in each of the 6,554 wards of the 753 local governments in Nepal (Adhikari et al., 2022).  As per Acharya (2013), rather than only "cosmetic representation" , women, Dalits and indigenous community  members have mandatory provisions for their  inclusion in political public spheres.

The constitution of Nepal is understood as a supportive piece of legislation for women. There are claims that universally recognized human rights are highly anchored in the constitution (MoWCSC, 2020). This fundamental statute guarantees women rights and women representation in every sector of the state apparatus. Article 38(1-5) describes 'Rights of women' with individual, familial, socio-economic and political rights. Women in Nepal are with equal rights to property and family affairs, equal lineage rights without any gender discrimination, safe motherhood and reproductive health, and are not subject to physical, mental, sexual, psychological, or any other forms of violence on grounds of religion, social, cultural, tradition, practice and so on. More crucially, the article 38(4) guarantees the rights of proportional inclusion of women in all entities of the state. Based on the principle of 'positive discrimination', women are entitled to special opportunities in the areas of education, health care, employment and social security. Furthermore, the article 18(3) of the constitution, under its provision of fundamental right to equality, reads as "nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of special provisions by law for protection, empowerment or development of citizens including the socially or culturally backward women…". However, Dalit women are unable to profit from these constitutional and legal stipulations (Dhaulakoti 25 Oct 2021). As, Mohtey (2020) argued, various social, economic and cultural elements should be of government's attention for the success or failure of Dalit women's political representation as mandated through the quota system at the local level.

Instead of the 'influential and high-profile women leadership role' (Acharya, 2013), Dalit women's mandatory political representation can gain more rationality behind the purpose of women's representation in politics. The provision of including Dalit members at the village municipal and district council levels was introduced by the Local Self Government-Act of 1999 (Adhikari et al., 2022). Article 40 of the constitution of Nepal prescribes that the Dalits shall have the fundamental rights to participate in all

governmental bodies in accordance with the principle of proportional inclusion, and there shall be special legal provisions ensuring the empowerment, representation and participation of the Dalits in public service and other sectors as well. Sharma (2019) argued that federalism was implemented in Nepal with an attempt to extend democracy to all, bring the governance closer to the people, and resolving disputes between the state and the marginalized section of population, and thereby to provide opportunities for equality and development of the marginalized. Constitutionally, Nepal's federal structure empowers the local government with twenty- two different rights and functions ranging from developmental, administrative to judicial (Timilsina, 2018).

The theoretical foundation of local government in Nepal included people's access to public services and safety at their door steps, people's empowerment to strengthen democracy, people's participation in development and resource mobilization, and making laws required for the people on their own (Timilsina, 2018 a). However, as Dhaulakoti (2021, Oct 25) quoted a Dalit Women People's Representative (DWPR) from Kapilvastu of Lumbini Pradesh that the constitution defined the local level as an autonomous government, and since the local governments are close to the people, could have been people-friendly and Dalit-friendly. Pariyar& Lovett (2016) also found that even the urban Dalits haven't been able to pursue their political agenda to the same degree as other communities.

According to articles 222 (4) and article 223(4) of the constitution of Nepal 2015, a village body or a municipality shall have their ward committees composed of five members including a ward chairperson and four ward members where 40 percent of the ward level people's representatives elected through first –past-the post-FPTP election system shall be women. Additionally, one out of the two mandatory women representatives must be a Dalit. However, if a party nominates a woman candidate for the position of woman ward member, this provision does not apply to that party (Timilsina, 2018a). Similarly, in the wards where there are no Dalit settlements,

the constitution keeps a silence on any alternative provision.

Dalit women and girls in Nepal are found particularly vulnerable due to the various forms of discrimination and they suffer from a default exclusion from the development process (K.C., 2020). Dalit women experience worse socio-economic conditions than Dalit men and women as a whole (Badi, 2012). In such a context, the 2017 municipal elections were viewed as the milestones for the socially, economically and politically marginalized women Dalit to enter the national mainstream with their opportunities and responsibilities to perform (Mohtey, 2020). Out of 753 local levels, 35,000 people's representatives have been elected in 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities and 460 village municipalities. Out of that, the number of Dalit representatives was 9528 and of them, 6567 were Dalit women members. However, Dhaulakoti (2021 October 25) wrote for the Kantipur National Daily, that the DWPRs themselves were in discrimination.

Political representation is believed to benefit Dalit women in terms of strengthening their competency and empowering the community they represent. There are studies showing identical significance including an increased political trust, enforcement of democratic practices in representation and boosting up political accessibility of the marginalized communities, Dalits and women at the local level (CSC, 2022). However, as Manandhar (2021) emphasized, it takes more than just a numeric rise for their meaningful representation and it also requires social awareness. Absence of political experience has been a major obstacle for Dalit women representatives (FEDO, 2022). Thus, while attempting to determine the elements influencing Dalit women's representation; a few more queries came up. More specifically, the kind of political leadership opportunities the Dalit women got or accepted generated more curiosity. Additionally, the process by which they came to represent or they got selected to represent, the difficulties they encountered when they had no prior experience with representation or those who had never served in the government was part of the

research interest. The experiences on political representation, welcoming of their leadership in the community, and their sources of inspiration were of research attention.

In the aforementioned scenario, this research had three specific questions to answer: what political representation did the Dalit women receive, how the objective behind the representation was addressed and why was their representation significant.

**Methods and Material**

This study follows a qualitative research design. Both the primary and secondary data are used for the analysis. The primary data is based on the perspectives received through the interviews and listening to the topical stories of the DWPRs from Biratnagar Metropolitan City (BMC) of Province 1 in Nepal. The analysis based on the narratives of the 19 DWPR in the city were gathered through informal conversations in Nepali, Hindi and Maithili languages as and when required for an in-depth understanding of the respondents with due ethical consideration and privacy to their names, party affiliation and contextual interpretations. On collection, the stories from all the 19 respondents, the data have been transcribed into English language and broadly prepared for both the narrative analysis to develop the core narratives and thematic analysis to comparatively develop the core theme of the subject. For the secondary data, the Constitution of Nepal and the Local Governance Act 2017 provide the foundation in advancing the discourse on the rationale of women and Dalit women representation in Nepal. Sociological perspectives have been applied to comprehend gender-based discrimination in the private and public domain, caste hierarchy stereotypes and the political hegemony within the Nepali social structure.

**Results and Discussion**

As stated in the methodology section above, for a thematic analysis and to comparatively develop the core theme of the subject, this result and discussion section   includes the following subsections.

**The Research Site and the Social Compassion of the Respondents**

Biratnagar is the provincial capital of Koshi, formerly known as province 1. The total population of the 19 wards of Biratnagar Metropolitan City was 2, 14,663 with 1,08,827 male and 1,05, 836 female with more than 25 distinct castes and ethnic groups, each of them making up more than 1% of the total population in the city (CBS, 2011). However, the household survey conducted by Biratnagar Metropolitan City office in 2019 revealed a total population of 3, 05, 529 with 1, 17,658 males 1, 12,799 females and 77 third-gender individuals. As per this survey, Biratnagar is home to 51650 households and 75,253 families representing 122 caste and ethnic groups (BMC, 2019). In 2001, Biratnagar's population consisted of 1% hill Dalits and 4.5% Terai Dalits with a growth rate of 3.98 per annum in the city by the population census of 2011 (ADB, 2008).

**Table: 1** *Community wise representation of the respondents*

| Community | % of the Respondents |
|---|---|
| Paswan | 31.58 |
| Pariyar | 15.80 |
| Sardar | 10.54 |
| Ramtel | 5. 26 |
| Bishwakarma | 5. 26 |
| Rishidev | 5. 26 |
| Harijan | 5. 26 |
| Das | 5. 26 |
| Baitha | 5. 26 |
| Tatma | 5. 26 |
| Podar | 5. 26 |
| Total | 100 |

The social composition of the 19 research respondents in this research revealed that there were 11 different communities from among hill and terai Dalits who could represent in the wards from the municipal elections of 2017. Likewise, the elected Dalit women representatives were also divided into different age categories. The following graph describes their age composition.

**Figure: 1 Age *composition of the respondents***
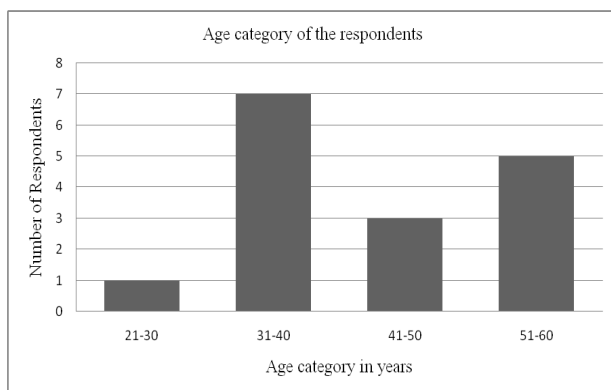


The age category of the respondents was 21-60 years where seven of the 19 respondents were between the ages of 31-40, and three were between the ages 41-50. These two categories were found having higher degrees of motivation behind their political representation.   However, five of them-all between the ages 51-60, also expressed their thoughts that their entry into politics was more of a 'chance' due to their time off from family responsibilities. However, the participant in the age category 21-30 years, with her enthusiasm, expressed that she was happy that the local party leaders identified her as a potential future leader as she was expecting to join and continue political leadership.

Mohtey (2020) stated that caste discrimination, gender inequality, cultural barriers and poverty have largely deprived Dalit

women from receiving education in Nepal (Level of education was an important aspect related to the respondents' level of confidence in their political participation and communication skills which was highly realized during the research interviews with them.

**Table: 2 *Educational Status of the respondents***

| Educational Qualification | % of the Respondents |
|---|---|
| Non formal education /Read and write only | 26.32 |
| Primary | 52.64 |
| Secondary | 15.78 |
| Intermediate | 5.26 |
| Total | 100 |

Ten (52.64%) of the 19 respondents had completed primary level schooling up to grade five, compared to five (26.32%) of the respondents who had no formal education but could write their names. Three of the respondents had studied up to the 10th grade and one (5.26%) of the respondents had completed their grade 12 education.

**The Perspectives on Caste Discrimination**

Nepal's Dalit study doesn't appear to be neutral without relating it to the caste-based hierarchy and to the social structure. As, Dhaulakoti (2021 Oct 25) found that Dalit women encountered double discrimination. When they endure gender violence at home, they become untouchables outside of their homes due to their caste. Caste-based discrimination experiences in the community and/ or workplace serve as justification for democratic and inclusive

representation. Therefore, the curiosity about the social attitude towards Dalit people's representatives arrived naturally. The respondents in the current research, more or less, concurred that the context and the circumstances have changed considerably. They expressed that, in general, the Dalits were a socially discriminated group. l. But it feels incredibly different compared to before. In numerous settings, there was a difference regarding the local community responses towards the Dalit women before and after they served as the people's representatives. A hill origin Dalit woman representative (DWR) expressed during an interview:

> *"When I wasn't a people's representative, people in my neighbourhood used to detest us as Dalit, but that is no longer the case."*

The caste-based compartmentalization of the society was a core concern throughout the research interviews. Political acceptance and social mobility helped reduce the caste-based discrimination against the water tight (*nep.pani nachalne*) and untouchable (*nep. acchut*) caste. The following narrative from 38 years old DWR from the Madhesi community explained this fact:

> *"Although few people don't harbour hatred for Dalit's nowadays,it is nevertheless common. A Marik (Dom) serves tea in our office that everyone enjoys together. The "pahade" people used to have some sort of discrimination against the Dalits and some Madeshi people also did the same. But this is gradually declining."*

**Social Mobility and Political Representation**

The potential social mobility and future political opportunities were crucial to discuss during the research interviews. One of the respondents from a Madhesi Dalit community said in an interview that in her community, a female who interacted with other males was marked as a shameless woman. One had to wear

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a veil while in front of the men. If she argued on it, people would call her 'chhuchchi' to mean a racy or an impolite lady.  But such remarks were not directed at her once she was elected as people's representative.  However, two of the nineteen respondents claimed to this researcher that they had never experienced any discrimination even when they lived an ordinary citizen's life, without any political affiliation.

A next respondent from the same community expressed her feelings while she shared her experience:

> "*People have started gossiping; just look at how well 'falano's (a pronoun for a name) wife is doing these days. We could all go.*"

The female peers had also requested her to inform them if there would be any more upcoming opportunities or any such event(s) they might be able to attend and if she could help them find employment opportunities for which, they would be grateful.  And she was pleased to share that she could manage to secure a job for a couple of them in the nearby local factories.

The respondents representing the Madheshi Dalit community shared that talking to men was forbidden for women folk and used to have restrictions even on speaking with one's husband's uncle or his elder brother. This ultimately kept them limited in social interaction and social mobility. However, such circumstances were reported as gradually changing.

> "*Let's say, as if the sky and the abyss were two separate entities.*"

A 38 years old representative among the respondents said as above. Literally it was realised that initially they were uncomfortable while interacting with the opposite gender.

> "*Before, we had no idea on how to communicate in a setting with so many people. We now know what and when to speak and what and when to refrain. We acquired where-what -to-*

*say knowledge while working.  Now, we can even discuss political issues with people like you."*

As a lively woman, this respondent drew this researcher into her conversation.  Interestingly, more or less, all the Dalit women representatives in the study area spoke in the same line that they could learn from the work they did or were expected to do.

**Socio-Political Leadership**

All the respondents were new in political leadership. Acquiring political leadership skills was a gradual process for all of them. It took a considerable period of time for them to understand what was going on politically.  But they articulated that the circumstances provided them with a radically distinct experience and learning opportunity. For example, the Covid 19 situation posed a big challenge for all of them. More or less, they agreed   with the viewpoint expressed by a young respondent, who said:

*"I had limited knowledge of politics and political leadership. The lockdown due to Covid 19 presented a challenge for us. Many of our planned projects were periodically halted."*

However, political participation was viewed as an avenue for women empowerment. Responding to a follow- up query, seventeen of them admitted that they had no prior knowledge about politics. They formerly thought of   themselves as mean people. They used to toil away all day outside their homes to make a living and would return home in the evening with little idea of what had transpired throughout the day.  Thus, they were    delighted to express that politics taught them a lot. They realised that politics brought about lots of changes. In particular, they achieved the ability and skill to speak. A 40- year- old research respondent was more confident while she was telling her following tale:

*"How and when could one speak like this before?  I am speaking to you directly in person right now. How could*

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*it be so before! Furthermore, it used to be exceedingly challenging to converse with any male. Now that everything is becoming obvious."*

## Empowerment through Socio-Political Mobilization

The respondents from the Madheshi Dalit community demonstrated their Nepali language proficiency while explaining the components of their socio-political mobilisation. A 34 years old respondent spoke easily in Nepali language during an interview with her:

"*My native tongue is the Tharu language. I was unable to communicate in Nepali. But over the last five years, I have learnt Nepali so well that I can easily speak to anyone now.*"

Similarly, a 55-year-old respondent from the Paswan community who spoke Nepali confidently revealed that she had been actively participating in local politics for more than 20 years and became an active member since she joined a political party in 2001. Mrs. Paswan was very excited and eager to share her thoughts and ideas:

*"My party and the electorates trusted in my work and I got elected locally. I have very good support from my family and the people of my community. This is always crucial for every woman who aspires to enter politics.*"

More intriguingly, a 40- year- old respondent, born as a Madhesi and married to a hill Dalit, perceived that political participation and leadership is something that enables women for social work. Thus, the local women should get wider opportunities to get involved in politics. She was found appealing while she commented:

*"We have to give a chance to the new ones, right? If only we keep getting the opportunity, what and when will the*

*others discover? Other ladies also need to advance. I would not have known or spoken before I was elected as a ward member. I learnt by joining politics. Now we have to give others a chance.*"

## Challenges and Opportunities for the Women Representatives in Service Delivery

Things were not easy for the women representatives in general and there were numerous difficulties while working. Particularly the economically unsound and marginalised communities anticipated increased assistance from the local representatives. Those wards where a large number of impoverished and landless people reside in the river banks required extra assistance from the local government during the Covid 19 pandemic, floods and other disaster events. Then the women reps had the greater responsibility of paying frequent visits to those families afflicted. Every time there was a flood, they had to walk to provide the victims with response, relief and basic supplies. And the hardest hit part in relief distribution was handled by them. A respondent from among those who had to work hard during the most recent flood scenario in Biratnagar remarked fluently:

> *"The two ladies among us took the details on the required relief. The men didn't work to reach the doors of the people as hard as we ladies. The men didn't exert as much effort as we women to reach the doors of the people. The men generally performed their important work in the office and at the municipality."*

However, in 52.63 percent of nineteen wards, all five elected members were reported to be working as a team maintaining equal concerns about matters within their jurisdiction. 26.31 percent of the respondents were found highly satisfied with their working relationship with the respective ward chairpersons, among the colleagues and the office employees.

**The Motivational Factors**

In every ward of the study area, the DWRs had, more or less, good working spirit with their other female colleagues who were elected in the open category. For instance, during the 2017 floods in the city, the women representatives in a ward had to knock on homes and gather the information on what went wrong with the flood victims, what property was damaged, and how much was the total value of it. Within 24 hours, they, along with two staff members, were required to prepare the identities of the flood victims, extent of property damage and details of the number of fatalities in the ward. However, in some circumstances, the age factors and their level of education created limitations and posed challenges in performance of the allotted tasks timely and effectively without external assistance.

Politics was not financially an attraction for the respondents but valued social identity and recognition. A 38-year-old respondent shared her experience:

> *"Earlier, I used to work as a machine operator in a garment factory. My monthly income was between Rs.25000 to Rs. 30,000 a month. And when my party people demanded that I have to quit my regular job, I even declined my candidacy. But they pulled me in and I won the election. However, I did not quit my job for a year and a half, since I needed money for my family and I had very less to work as a ward committee member, beyond attending a few meetings per month."*

But she was obliged to leave her job in the second year of her being elected. On quitting the job, she lost the money but she was pleased that she could earn social respect and dignity. She related her personal experience of being ignored in the past. She consequently understood that respect was more valuable than money. She was entirely at liberty to share her happiness. For this respondent, the most important thing was to get recognition for her work. She could potentially learn a lot of things in the ward. The

ward chairman listened to her and to other ward members including her female colleague. All of them were happy when the ward chair assigned each of them with distinct work responsibilities. Another respondent, 55 years old, expressed her excitement when she stated:

> *"Now people recognize me. I know many of them. They come to me to discuss a variety of local development-related issues. And to me, there is no distinction between the Dalits and others. All are our people. We shall collaborate."*

Dalit women's awareness on politics and political engagement at the grassroots level was a primary concern of this research. A respondent, who was quite popular as an active people's representative during this research interview, was forthright enough to narrate her political background and leadership motivation quality while saying,

> *"I did not know about politics even though my husband was a member of the party."*

According to her, the men folk only acknowledged her as someone's wife. When they needed a Dalit woman candidate, they approached her. One day, coincidentally, she returned home from work at 4 o'clock in the evening. She was asked to become a candidate in the election, and the following morning she signed a blank piece of paper and left. Later she received the election ticket and started canvassing the neighborhoods   asking for votes with other candidates of her panel.

## Community Impacts

Women's representation from the Dalit community did have several positive impacts. On a question, regarding what changes were experienced in the previous five years, a 41-year-old respondent replied,

> *"I had the opportunity to be close to the people. Both the floods and the Corona virus were occasionally terrifying. But if not for it without that, we might not be attempting*

*to contact the population. The children of Marik Tole attend boarding schools these days. In the past, they used to dabble with nasty words on the road, but not anymore*."

One more similar response from a next respondent was,

"*I could work enough while I was in the ward. I initiated and to conduct training for women in tailoring and doll-making. We also worked on making roads and drains, installing electric lights, and that was what the inhabitants of each  ward required.*"

In an additional question on the prospects for their representation in future, nearly every respondent including the elected Dalit women representatives of 2017 municipal election expressed great confidence. A 40-year- old respondent stated:

*"We now understand politics. We know what needs to be done and how to execute it.  Therefore, we will be re-elected."*

However, five of the nineteen representatives in the study area were aware that there could be a stiff rivalry and competition for getting a candidacy in the Dalit category too. Earlier, the parties had to struggle finding a candidate in the Dalit woman category and they had to request someone to become a candidate representing their party. By that time, in some wards, up to three candidates from the same party had started demanding to become candidates in the same category. And in response to a follow-up question, two of the respondents expressed their limitations while they said,

*"Everything is subject to the party member's decision. Additionally, elections also cost money and we did not make any money for the upcoming elections.*"

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that political representation enables to enhance the aptitude of Dalit women at the local level and can

support, to some extent, their empowerment and growth of the community they represent. However, there are certain elements that govern their substantive and meaningful representation. In most contexts their representation was simply to attain the constitutional and legal requirements and it was not an ordinary course of events. The kind of political leadership opportunity the Dalit women got or accepted was largely motivated by tokenism. In several contexts, the representation of the Dalit women was purely symbolic. However, there were people who were not in politics, and faced many challenges in their day-to- day lives. They were socially discarded, the majority of whom were ignorant of politics and political representation, thus were lacking previous experience of representation. They had never experienced any political representation or they had never served the government at any level. However, they were inspired by the leadership of other political representatives including the ward chair, the mayor and the deputy-mayor. Additionally, their representation was not likely to have significantly measurable socio-economic impact on them and their community. The community response they achieved was typical. However, they felt that they had gained some leadership quality and had access to the local political network. It marginally benefited the individual Dalit woman representative and the community they represented. Prior to becoming political leaders, they were not political rivals and were elected by the ordinary citizens. Higher levels of political indoctrination and leadership training for the Dalit women representatives would increase their meaningful participation and goal-oriented achievement for the community they represented. However, during the five years of their representation, they had grown more certain that, provided a second chance or more opportunities to represent, they would be able to lead their community better. Finally, this article is believed to help readers

understand the contextual background and the current state of Dalit women's political representation at the local level, and opens up new avenues for academic and political discussion.

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# Adoption of Digital Agro-Advisory Services Among Smallholder Farmers: Patterns of the Innovation-Decision Process

Bristi Vaidya, Hritika Rana, PhD & Sagar Raj Sharma, PhD

Various digital agricultural advisory services have been developed to effectively exchange agriculture related information, skill and knowledge with the farmers. However, innovation and readiness of such technology does not guarantee that it will be adopted by the farmers. This study focuses on understanding farmers' adoption of digital agro-advisory while exploring factors that influence the patterns of adoption and non-adoption. A mixed-method research was conducted with 50 farmers of Kageshwori Manohara Municipality of Bagmati province, Nepal, who were also the users of mobile-based agriculture application, namely GeoKrishi. The innovation-decision process of the diffusion innovation theory was used as an analytical lens for data interpretation. The study findings show that there were three categories of farmers in terms of their adoption decision i.e., passive rejecters, active rejecters and active adopters. These decisions were influenced by factors such as digital literacy, farmer's agricultural needs, communication channel, farmer's social network, socio-economic and household dynamics and technological cluster. The study further argues that such innovations need to incorporate information that not just aligns with the needs of any farmers but should also be based on the local context.

**Keywords**: Agriculture extension, agro-advisory, digital farming, ICT for agriculture, smallholder farmer

**Introduction**

Agricultural extension is regarded as the bridge connecting farmers with evidence-based research and education which allows for the transfer of information, skills and new technologies (Ghimire et al., 2021). Extension services thus facilitates farmers to make informed decisions, leading to improved productivity, income, livelihood (Oakley & Garforth, 1985), and more recently towards sustainable agriculture (Allahyari & Sadeghzadeh, 2020). Along with public institutions, different NGOs/INGOs, private companies, and service providers have been extending such services to the farmers, making it more pluralistic in approach (Babu & Sah, 2019; Blum et al., 2020; Ghimire et al., 2021). However, extension services have not been effective in reaching out to the farmers due to unmet actual needs (Fuglie et al., 2020), lack of accessibility and infrastructural limitations (Bell, 2015), limited capacity and management problems (Birner & Anderson, 2007; Bell, 2015). Development of advanced information and communication technology (ICT) has changed the modus operandi for almost every sector of work including agricultural extension (Davis & Alex, 2020). Along with traditional ICT tools such as radio, television and newspaper, new mediums such as internet, videos, messages, mobile applications or 'apps' have been developed and has become an integral means of communication between farmers and other stakeholders for advisory services (Davis & Alex, 2020; Christoplos, 2010).

Such ICT tools could be a means to improve information accessibility to farmers and forge stronger connections between all the actors involved (Bell, 2015). Despite limited infrastructural development, there is an exponential use of mobile-phones in developing countries (Aker et al., 2016). Mobile-phone is one of the most common ICT devices used in Nepal, with 93 percent of the households having at least one mobile (MoH et al., 2017). In addition, the Digital Framework of 2019 asserts that the mobile

penetration among Nepali population was hundred percent and internet penetration was 63 percent. According to Magar (2020), mobile-phones have the capability of reaching more than 90 percent of the household, as around 90.1 percent rural households possess at least one mobile-phone (MoH et al., 2017). Despite having a hundred percent rate of mobile-phone sets, not every individual owns a mobile phone due to socio-economic barriers.

Several mobile-based applications developed by both public and private service providers have mushroomed in the country. Lately, KrishiGuru, GeoKrishi and SmartKrishi have more than 100,000 downloads. The Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035) of Nepal also promotes the role of mobile apps to disseminate agro-advisory. In general, most apps like, SmartKrishi, KrishiGuru, NARC Krishi focus on package of practices, weather and climate forecast, harvesting, storage, news, e-books and expert consultations (Magar, 2020; Thapa et al., 2020; Paudel et al., 2018) and has Nepali language as the primary language. Apart from above mentioned features, some apps like GeoKrishi and KrishiGhar also emphasize location specific advisory (Magar, 2020; Thapa et al., 2020; Paudel et al., 2018). Additionally, agriculture related television programs and radio programs also exist, with some apps that provide guidance on business planning with offline options. However, it is important to understand that availability and accessibility is not the only salient factor that motivates farmers to adopt such apps (Kassem et al., 2020). In terms of using a new technology, when a farmer is aware of new information and has taken interest, it is crucial to evaluate farmers' views and experiences about using such innovation (Oakley & Garforth, 1985). Only when concerned stakeholders understand their viewpoint can they customize such applications according to farmers' need and context, after which adoption could be more likely. Bell (2015) concurs that farmers can diagnose their problems with sufficient expertise, can collect data and price information, can

negotiate directly with the input suppliers, access financial credit, exchange feedback, and use it for record keeping through such mobile services. Similarly, while there are various applications for farmers in Nepal, it is essential to understand what farmers think about such innovation. The main intention of agriculture extension as suggested by Oakley & Garforth (1985) is to work with the farmers, with different needs. Thus, it is necessary that it actually serves farmers needs rather than supplying farmers with new technology just because it is ready to be used (McCampbell et al., 2023; Kassem et al., 2020). It is within this context that the current paper has focused on understanding smallholder farmer's patterns of innovation-decision process on adoption of digital agro-advisory services (DAAS).

## Literature Review
### History of agriculture extension

The exact date or year as to when agriculture extension was introduced for the first time in the world is not known. Its origin differs from researcher to researcher in terms of year and place. According to Swason & Rajalahti (2010) it was the potato famine that instigated the need of such services in Ireland in 1845. Birkhaeuser et al. (1991) assert that the execution of extension dates back to World War II. Some claim that the universities in the United Kingdom introduced extension for the first time in 1867. Many developing countries had started adopting agriculture extension programs formally after the second world war (Birkhaeuser et al., 1991). In the context of Nepal, agricultural extension was introduced in 1951 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) (Dahal et al., 2020; Thapa et al., 2020).

Different approaches are used for agricultural extension such as Technology Transfer Extension model, Participatory Extension Approach, Market Oriented Extension Approach and Non-formal

education or Extension Approach (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). Amidst the agricultural extension models in the world, present approaches in Nepal include of Conventional Educational approach, Pocket Package approach, Projectization approach, Farmer's Group Approach, Farmer's Field School Approach and Partnership Approach (Ghimire et al., 2021;Babu & Sah, 2019; Global Sustainable Research and Development Center, 2018; Sharma, 2014). Most countries are shifting from technology transfer methods towards more participatory, inclusive and market-oriented techniques (Davis, 2020). However, it has not been able to deliver optimally (Paudel et al., 2018). Updated and real-time information does not reach farmers because of inadequate infrastructure such as roads, market centers, transport and lack of proper assessment (Ghimire et al., 2021; Thapa et al., 2020; Dhital, 2017). Its ineffectiveness in delivering quality agro-advisory to the farmers is evident in its low coverage, which is 15 percent, with extension agent to farmers' household ratio being 1:1333 in 2005 (Lamichhane et al., 2022; Paudel et al., 2018) and 1:1399 according to the Agriculture Development Strategy 2015 in Nepal (MoAD, 2015). Diversity in farmers' access to extension services is presented by Berry (2012), whereas, FAO recommended extension to farmer ratio in 2000 was considered to be 1:800 (Owolabi & Yekinni, 2022). As a result, many farmers do not have access to quality extension services.

*Concept of ICT for agriculture extension*

In traditional extension service, an agent was required to be trained and sent to farmers to disseminate information. With the development of new technologies, radio, television, and the internet were used. According to Aker et al. (2016) and Jensen (2007), mobile-phone is changing the scenario and making information circulation comparatively economical as it lets farmers, extension agents and traders to explore more information without having to travel, allowing farmers to enhance their bargaining power with

the traders or any other actors. Ninety-five percent of the world population has access to mobile broadband networks with eighty-five percent coverage in the developing countries as estimated by ITU (2022). Expanding coverage of mobile-phone usage in developing countries, has led to the transition from conventional ICT mediums such as TV and radio towards more contemporary ICT tools namely computers and mobile-phones (Aker et al., 2016; Bell, 2015). These contemporary ICT tools make exchange of information possible through voice or audio, Short Message Service (SMS), mobile-based applications or 'apps', and also websites (Aker et al., 2016).

Consequently, Veeraraghavan et al. (2007) underline that computers or kiosks as ICT tools for agricultural extension have high maintenance cost, whereas more convenient, and comparatively less costly for the farmers is via mobile-based service like SMS. Similarly, Aker et al. (2016) states that mobile-phones with its low cost of communication has the capacity to bring about tremendous changes in agro-advisory. In addition to market information, the introduction of DAAS such as Avaaj Otalo, a voice application gave smallholder farmers in India direct access to authorized agriculture experts for pest or disease management which decreased their dependence on other farmers and input dealers for such information, leading farmers towards better input decision and increased yield (Cole & Fernando, 2020; Patel et al., 2010). The introduction of smart-mobile apps has provided even more advanced, need-based options to the users where all the required information is accessible in one touch (Sivakumar et al., 2022; Barh & Balakrishnan, 2018).

Traditional ICT instruments such as radio and television have been widely used as agricultural extension tools for technology transfer in Nepal (Magar, 2020). Recently, the Agriculture Information and Training Center (AITC) of the Nepal Government operates the Kisan Call Center and provides SMS services to farmers (Paudel et al., 2018). Similarly, with transformational development

in technology, various mobile-based apps such as SmartKrishi, GeoKrishi (Paudel et al., 2018; Magar, 2020), and many others like KrishiGuru, SuperKrishak, KhetiFarm, HamroKrishi, PokharaKrishi have been developed in the country. Project for Agriculture Commercialization (PACT) and Agriculture Management Information System (AMIS) have been initiated under the Ministry of Agriculture Development (MoAD) and it encourages the use of such applications and is working to improve access for the farmers (Paudel et al., 2018). Nepal Digital Framework 2019 also stresses on improving agriculture related government mobile apps like NARC Krishi app and Bhumi Sushasaan application (MoCIT, 2019).

*Challenges and opportunities for Digital Agro-Advisory Services*

One of the most prominent barriers that limits an individual's adoption of agriculture advisory is the digital divide (Aker et al., 2016; Keniston & Kumar, 2003). Not every farmer is able to afford a smartphone or have internet access. Even if they could afford it, not everyone will be able to navigate through such applications. Similarly,the primary language used in the app may be a hindrance to many farmers. These factors will widen the gap between people who can and cannot use it. Those who cannot use it will be left behind, when that is not at all the intention of such services. To address such challenges, spoken interface or audio could be an integrated function in the ICT tool for the illiterate farmers to listen to and send a recorded audio in exchange (Medhi et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, ICT tools are expected to minimize gap related to agricultural extension such as lack of proper infrastructure, poor accessibility and low coverage, insufficient technical and communication knowledge and skills (Bell, 2015), through its versatile features and consequently improve people's livelihood (Aker et al., 2016; Bell, 2015). Aker et al. (2016) considers mobile-phones with its low cost of communication to have the capacity to bring about tremendous changes in agro-advisory services. Jensen

(2007), highlights the importance of mobile-phone to get market information which could save time and lead to reduction in price dispersion, decrease in wastage, and increase profit. Additionally, smartphone apps allows two-way communication possible (Gaur & Tiwari, 2022; Sivakumar et al., 2022). On one hand, farmers can attain appropriate information and resolve farm-based problems without complications, receive updated weather forecasts, up-to-date market rates, details on latest technology, knowledge on government policies and schemes, financial services, training and also videos from where they can watch and learn. On the other hand, they can also put forward their confusions and discuss with experts through the application. It is also considered to be cost effective, timely and prompt even in developing countries as compared to spending on hiring, training and mobilizing extension workers (Sivakumar et al., 2022).

While many studies endorse the use of digital agro-extension, it is equally important to assess farmers viewpoint and understand their readiness, needs and its use before its execution in a large scale so that appropriate changes can be made, and such technology is adopted favourably and used sustainably (McCampbell et al., 2023). For instance, McCampbell et al.(2023) studied capability of Rwandan banana farmers to use a phone-based application i.e. 'BxW- App' which was introduced for the prevention and control of banana Xanthomanas Wilt disease (BxW). The study highlighted the gap between availability of technology and capability of users to use it. With only three percent of farmers owning a smartphone, the results maintained the importance of using traditional ICT tools such as radio along with new innovation so that farmers who cannot use the application can still have access and are not left behind. The study provided a crucial insight on the importance of incorporating traditional options along with new technology to create alternative opportunities for the farmers. Sivakumar et al. (2022) evaluated twenty-five different applications operated in India and suggested

the need of incorporating regional language for more inclusivity, improvement on user interface, such as more pictorial illustrations, fixing errors on time, and need to update technological innovations in the agricultural sector more regularly. Such evaluations play an important role as it provides insight on actual user experiences and their needs which can be further improved by app developers, community-based organisations and policy makers. While many authors suggest limitless possibilities that an ICT tool can create to extend agro-advisory services to the farmers, it is also imperative to understand the drawbacks it can bring with it, which needs to be considered while planning to implement such services as made evident by numerous researchers.

## Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature as it focuses on understanding the challenges and opportunities that smallholder farmer's face during the process of adopting a new innovation, i.e digital agro-advisory services. Concurrent mixed-method design (Kroll & Neri, 2009; Leavy 2017; Creswell & Clark, 2018) was used as qualitative and quantitative data were simultaneously collected. A structured questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions were prepared in Survey CTO – a digital data collection software. Collected data was then cleaned, sorted, and analyzed separately but were triangulated and merged later. Quantitative data was separated in SPSS and excel for descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data from the survey was transcribed as necessary and coded and analyzed using Nvivo. Use of mobile devices by the participants during the survey was encouraged to assess farmers' digital literacy and confidence. Likewise, pictures and photo query features were also considered to understand farmers' ability to use digital devices. The study has incorporated the Innovation-decision process under diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003) as an analytical and

theoretical framework to understand farmer's decision-making process of adopting DAAS.

**Study Site and Sample**

Kageshwori Manohara Municipality located in Kathmandu District of Bagmati Province in Nepal was purposely chosen as the study site because the sampling procedure illustrated the majority of the active users of GeoKrishi app to be in this site (see Table 1). Major agricultural production included paddy, wheat, seasonal and unseasonal vegetables mainly tomato. The total number of households in the municipality is 26,166 and the literacy rate of the area is 96.16 percent (Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, 2022). Out of the total 73,648 registered users in Nepal as of August, 2022, 1136 were registered in Kathmandu, but only 68 users were considered to be active users by GeoKrishi, which is 5.98 percent only. Based on the information provided by GeoKrishi, all active users of Kageshwori Manohara were contacted. However only 23 active users could participate in the study due to their time unavailability, no response while phone call from some, and 2 specifically suggested that they did not use the app anymore.

Table 1: Number of Active Geokrishi Users in Different Municipalities of Kathmandu

| Budhanilkantha | 1 | Gokarneshwor | 4 | Shankarapur | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chandragiri | 9 | Kageshwori Manohara | 31 | Kathmandu Metropolitan | 8 |
| Dakshinkali | 3 | Nagarjun | 3 | Tarakeshwor | 5 |

Source: GeoKrishi, 2023

A total of 50 farmers have been selected based on criterion sampling. It includes 23 active users of GeoKrishi and 27 not active users but those who had attended GeoKrishi training. According to GeoKrishi, active users are those farmers who have used the

application at least 3-4 times a month and have made crop related queries. A total of 96 percent out of the 50 study participants had received GeoKrishi training while the remaining 4 percent had not received any training but were informed about GeoKrishi by their friends. This reflects that all the participants were aware and had knowledge about the mobile app. Criterion, purposive and cluster-based sampling resulted in the selection of the given site.

**Innovation-Decision Process: A Theoretical Lens**

According to Rogers (2003) the diffusion of innovation is 'a process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.' It is basically a course of action for a new idea, practice, or technology to be exchanged through various means (Zhang et al., 2015). In this regard, Rogers (2003) asserts that any innovation is likely to be either accepted or rejected resulting in some kind of externality to a social change. Five stages of the innovation-decision process from the stage of getting knowledge about a new technology to actually confirming their adoption has been proposed. The five stages include Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and Confirmation. According to the theory, even if an individual knows about a new idea, practice, or a product, and is aware about its advantages, the individuals do not use or adopt it that easily. Various factors influence people's behaviour before considering adoption of an innovation. In this context, the diffusion of innovation theory provides a framework to understand factors that influence adoption of an innovation. The innovation under study is the DAAS. This theory typically focuses on the diffusion of an innovation from top-down approach. However, in this study, the data are presented and analyzed from innovators' side of diffusion as well as farmers' own initiatives to adopt new innovation.

## Results

*Respondents' Characteristics*

Out of the 50 respondents, 42 percent were male and 58 percent were females, aged between 27 to 63 years. All the participants had attained some level of education with the majority of respondents having primary (48 %), SLC/SEE (34 %) and secondary (18 %) level education. All the respondents were involved in agriculture either as a main occupation (86 %) or as a secondary occupation (14 %). Out of which 68 percent were involved in vegetable farming, 4 percent in cereal crop farming only and remaining 28 percent grew both cereals and vegetables. Forty percent of the respondents were engaged in livestock rearing such as goats, chickens, and cows. Out of which slightly less than half of them were doing it for commercial purposes. Fifty-four percent of respondents owned land in Kageshwori which ranged from minimum of 0.6 to 8 ropanis, and 46 percent had ancestral land in their village but were leasing land in Kageshwori for settlement as well as for agricultural purposes. In global comparison, smallholders are mostly considered as those who roughly cultivate around 2 ha of land (Lowder et al., 2021; Shiva, 2016), which means that the study respondents were all smallholder farmers as they owned less than 0.5 ha of agricultural land.

*Status of Agricultural Extension*

Most frequently used channels for agro-advisory included neighbors (78 %), followed by agro-vet (70 %), digital channels like YouTube (68 %) and agriculture related mobile-based app (68 %). Respondents also used public institutions such as Municipality and Agricultural Knowledge Center, technical extension agents like the Junior Technicians or Junior Technical Assistants (JT/JTA, Agro-vet and Agriculture suppliers), community-based platforms (farmers group and cooperatives), interpersonal networks (family and relatives) and other digital platforms (radio, television, mobile-

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phone call, Kisan call center, SMS, Internet search engine, Zoom/ Google Meet, and Facebook). Majority had used Municipality (34 %) over the AKC (8 %). Out of those who had received extension services from the Municipality, around 82 percent had received it between 1 to 3 times in the past year, remaining 12 percent received it 4-10 times while another 6 percent accessed it above 10 times. Out of those who had received Municipality service, around 47 percent had also visited the office. Some had visited the Municipality for soil testing, and to get information on training and upcoming distribution of seeds. The ward and its Facebook page was also considered as a source of information on agriculture through which farmers received authorized government notices and information about training and seed distribution. In addition, the NARC office had also provided a few participants with seeds for rice and corn.

Almost all the JT/JTA in the study site were employed by the private sector to extend agro-advisory to the farmers. Other agents included cooperative or agro-vet based JT/JTA, and agriculture suppliers. The most popular technical agents were agro-vets as 70 percent of the respondents received agro-advisory from them, followed by JT/JTA (30 %) and other farm suppliers (18 %). Respondents mostly contracted agrovets when there was disease, pest or insect problem in their farm for diagnosis. Often they would take the sample to get recommendations on appropriate pesticide use. Out of the respondents who had received agro-advisory from agro-vets, 46 percent received it more than 10 times in the past year and 54 percent received it 10 times or less. Few respondents also found it convenient to visit a nearby cooperative rather than commuting far to reach other institutions. Some respondents shared that they could receive information from the cooperative and also share information that they received from other sources like JTA, Municipality and AKC to the cooperative members. Cooperatives often organized training according to the queries and needs shared in cooperative

meetings. Likewise, cooperatives could also call JTAs for the farmers and conduct various training on tomato farming, cucumber farming and soil treatment as requested by cooperative members. Training on mobile applications like GeoKrishi was also conducted through cooperatives. Apart from these sources, labor exchange, also known as parma jane, khetalo, mela jane, saghaune in Kageshwori, was a source of agro-information as it provided some farmers with an opportunity to observe and learn from other farmers.

Figure 1: Use of various agricultural extension channels by farmers (in %)
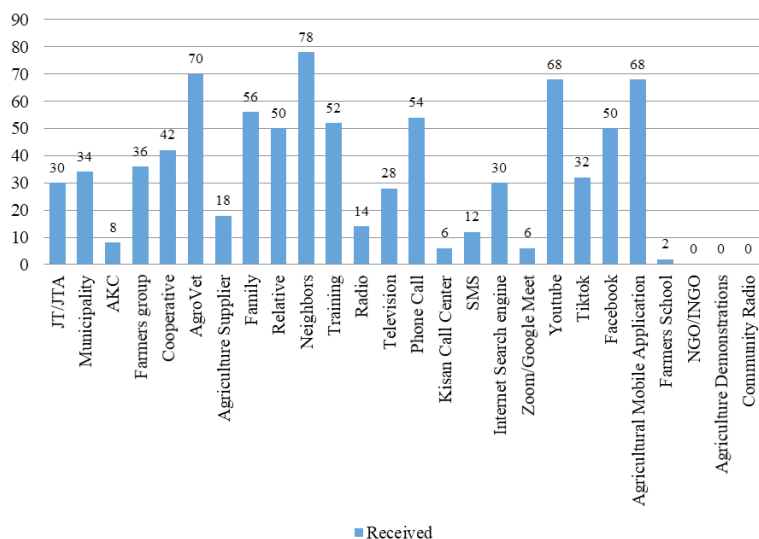


*Digital ownership and accessibility*

Every household had at least 2 mobile-phones, owned mostly by adult household members. Major function of a mobile-phone was to make phone calls. Apart from that, they also used YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Viber, WhatsApp, Google, SMS, and agriculture and non-agriculture related applications, news updates, games and business purposes. Some respondents shared

that their children in the household started using mobile-phones to study since Covid-19. Ninety-two percent had a smartphone, whereas 8 percent had a simple phone. The cost of mobile-phones ranged from minimum NRs. 900 to maximum NRs. 69,999. While the majority of respondents bought mobile-phones by themselves, mostly women farmers said that it was their husband who bought the device for them to use (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Respondent's capacity to buy mobile-phone
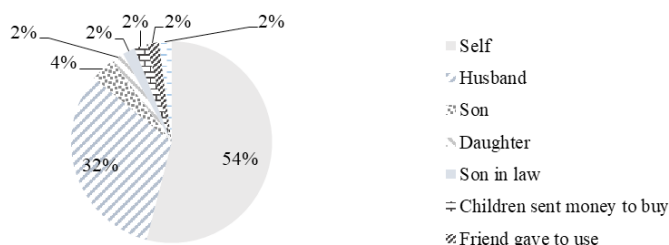


Almost two-third respondents did not share their phone with anyone and considered their phone to be personal, while the rest of the respondents shared it with their spouse, sons and daughters. Seventy percent used Nepal telecom as their mobile network, 12 percent used Ncell and 18 percent used both Nepal telecom and Ncell. Accordingly, 78 percent used wi-fi to use the internet, 20 percent used both wi-fi and mobile data, and the remaining 2 percent used mobile data only.

Use of Digital Platform for Agriculture Extension

Numerous digital platforms provided agro-advisory to the farmers including of conventional mediums such as Radio (14 %), television (28 %), mobile-phone call (54 %), and innovative digital platforms such as Kisan Call Center (6 %), Zoom/Google meet (6 %), SMS (12 %), Internet search engine (30 %), TikTok (32 %), Facebook (50 %), YouTube (68 %), and agriculture related mobile apps (68 %). Almost one-third of the respondents used YouTube and mobile

apps for 10 or less than 10 times in the past year. Likewise, slightly more than one-third used it more than 10 times in the last year (See Figure 3). Many farmers also called one of the largest agro-market in Nepal – the Kalimati Bazaar to get market price information. Few farmers had also received information on availability of subsidies and seasonal mini-kits from the agriculture section/department of the Municipality, AKC and Ward office, either through phone calls or Facebook posts.

Figure 3: Use of Digital Platforms for Agro-Advisory (In %)
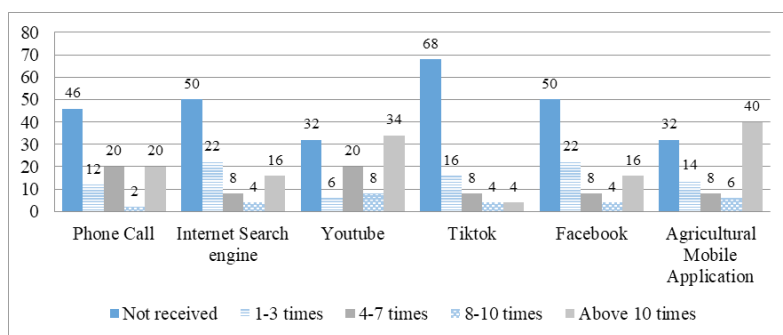


Regarding mobile app use, 76 percent had used GeoKrishi only, 3 percent had used SmartKrishi, and 15 percent had used both GeoKrishi and SmartKrishi, while the remaining had already stopped using such applications. These applications have been in existence in Nepal since 2020 and 2018 respectively. In addition to these two apps, around 6 percent had also used HamroPatro, KrishiChautari and an Indian agriculture app whose name the respondent could not recall. Among the few mobile-based apps that the farmers were using, GeoKrishi was the only service provider that had conducted various training programs through Municipality, Ward, Cooperatives and Farmer's Group. Majority of the respondents suggested that they got to know about the app through farmer's groups (32 %), Municipality (24 %), cooperative (22 %), Facebook (4 %), YouTube (2 %) and

other sources (18 %). Few respondents received the information from 2 sources, including Municipality and either neighbor, Facebook, or farmer's group. Out of the total respondents, 56 percent of GeoKrishi users who had been continuously using the app had used it for a minimum of 8 months to maximum of 3 years since the training. Another 12 percent used it for a minimum of 1-2 days to 2 years after the training and discontinued using it. The remaining 32 percent did not use the app after the training. In order to understand the factors influencing respondents to make such decisions on adoption of an innovation, the data has been further analyzed through Roger's 5 stages of the innovation-decision process (Rogers, 2003).

## Discussion

### *Knowledge Stage*

This stage allows individuals to get exposed to the existence of a new innovation and how it functions. During this stage, the communication channel plays a significant role. GeoKrishi customized one-day training to the farmers by networking with the Municipality, Ward, Cooperatives and Farmer's Group as they considered that the authority of these stakeholders would influence the decision of farmers regarding adoption of the app. During the training, farmers were given information about the app, process of downloading the app, how to use the app and various available features on the app (see Table 2).

Table 2: Overview of features available in GeoKrishi

| Overview of Features available in GeoKrishi | |
|---|---|
| Type of crop and livestock information | Yes |
| Total number of crop | 50 |
| Total number of livestock | 7 |
| Pre-planting information | Crops<br>Planning (Expected expenditure,<br>Choosing a breed, Crop Production Calendar, Land choice, Soil Testing, Weather Information according to the crop |

| | |
|---|---|
| During planting information | Nursey Information,<br>Land Preparation,<br>Sapling transfer,<br>Crop Care, according to the crop |
| Harvest information | Crop harvesting (Right time and how to harvest) according to the crop |
| Post-harvest information | After Harvesting (For Local and Other Market) according to the crop |
| Pest control and management information | Information on different kind of diseases and insects according to the crop |
| other farm management operations | Automated Work Calendar, Fertilizer Calculator, Farmers Diary - where a farmer can note pesticides/insecticides or organic fertilizer that they have used. And suggests noting such information will be necessary when they have to get a GAP certification. They can also note their expenditure and manage accordingly, |
| Weather feature | Yes - Daily and hourly |
| Text | Yes |
| Videos | Yes |
| Audio voice | Yes |
| Pictures | Yes |
| Photo sending option | Yes. Can send it to consullt about crop health or animal health with the experts |
| Call toll free | Not a toll free number but help Desk Phone Number is provided |
| Expert Consultation | Yes |
| Connect with other extension providers | Yes |
| Personal/customized messaging features | Yes |
| Calculation features | Yes<br>Automated fertilizer calculator according to the crop chosen, expected Income, expenditure and profit according to the land size |
| Market information | Yes<br>Kalimati market price list for various crops, vegetables and fruits, masala<br><br>They can also add expected produce |
| Source of Market information | Yes Kalimati Bazaar |
| Market buying feature | Yes |
| Type of products available in buy feature | Yes |
| Market selling feature | Yes<br>Provided list of market names and their contact number |
| E-Community meetings | Yes |
| Agriculture news | Yes |
| Government agriculture service notice board | Yes |
| Information on Loan | Yes |
| Information on Insurance | Yes |
| Information on importance of farming | Yes |
| Notifications | Yes |
| Information on Climate friendly Agriculture | Yes (Added recently) |

Source: GeoKrishi application, 2023 (as compiled by authors)

Application features included registering the farm, farm size, market rate for the product, weather information, crop-cycle management practices with the option of auto notification according to the crop chosen, pest and disease management through message, photo query exchange option, and search options. At this point, farmers were communicated about the innovation of the app and its purpose to cater to the needs of

the farmers. However, awareness about an innovation does not assure that the respondents would adopt it. Various factors play a role and have some level of influence on the favorable or unfavorable perception that individuals make about the innovation which will then convince them to use it (Rogers, 2003). This is evident from the data that shows that some farmers who had not received any training became active users, while many who had received the training did not continue using the app. The channel through which one receives the information about an innovation is crucial as active users who did not receive any training were informally made aware by their neighbors who saw the benefit of using the app and started disseminating the knowledge in their neighborhood. This leads to the second level of the innovation-decision process which is the persuasion stage.

*Persuasion Stage*

In this stage, respondents form different perceptions about the product and thus move from knowing to feeling, where individuals start forming an attitude and opinion towards the innovation which either encourages or discourages them to try a new product. Out of 96 percent of respondents who had received the training, 44 percent did not form a positive view of the app and thought that the training did not support them to use the app. Farmers asserted that the major reason for them to use the app would be the ability to access information that is relevant to their farm needs. Despite, initial attitude towards the app, many farmers tried the app because they were primarily involved in farming and that they perceived they could get new updated information on agricultural practices. Farmers also assumed that they could learn more and share it with other farmers. Similarly, a handful of farmers started using it to get market price information. Likewise, few farmers thought they could use the app to exchange farm problems like pests or other diseases with the experts through message or photo sharing option

and also receive proper solutions to it. Apart from these reasons, one participant was also motivated to use it because it would save their time, and another respondent shared they could get relevant agriculture notices through the app.

When a new technology is introduced to an individual, they are uncertain about the risks of using it. So they sometimes seek reassurance from others who have already used it to see if they are on the same page as others and are not the only ones taking the risk (Rogers, 2003). Despite respondents having knowledge and information about the app through initial training, not every respondent felt that the training was the major source of persuasion to use the app. Only about 10 percent of the farmers suggested that attending the training persuaded them to use it, whereas many farmers were further persuaded by their friends, neighbors, cooperatives, and farmer's groups. Formal and informal channels of communication and network created an environment for reaffirming and encouraging the farmers to use the app. The perceptions that farmers developed about the app, after initial trial, backed their decision to either try or not try the app, leading to the decision stage.

*Decision Stage*

Consequently, after being aware about the app, 68 percent of the respondents decided to try using the app, while 32 percent passively rejected it. Among 32 percent of those who decided not to use the app, few revealed they could not properly remember, recall or understand exactly what was taught during one-day training. Some also suggested that the service providers never followed-up with them, which resulted in further lack of interest. This highlights the significant role that a change agent like service provider can play during the persuasion stage that ultimately results in adopters decision-making (Rogers, 2003). Similarly, few were not aware about having to take their smartphone along

with them for the training which resulted in farmers feeling disconnected during the session. Few respondents did not use the app because they could not read, write or type. Some respondent who had turned auto-notification on during the download, shared how frequent notification pop-ups made him delete the app as most notifications were not relevant to his needs. Likewise, some considered alternative digital mediums such as the internet as a broader search engine to be more applicable to their needs than the given applications. Apart from that, few of the respondents revealed that their children deleted the app to free the space to download games, after which they did not re-download it.

Hence, there were 3 categories of farmers that were identified in this stage according to their adoption decision. First category of farmers are those who decided to passively reject using the app after training (32 %), second category included those who actively rejected it after downloading and using the app for a while (12 %) and third category who adopted the app (56 %). Consequently, to understand how farmers decide to adopt the app, the implementation stage is necessary as Rogers (2003) believed that farmers were deciding mentally on the adoption of such apps till the decision stage but when they start to actually use the app, it leads to the implementation stage of the innovation-decision process.
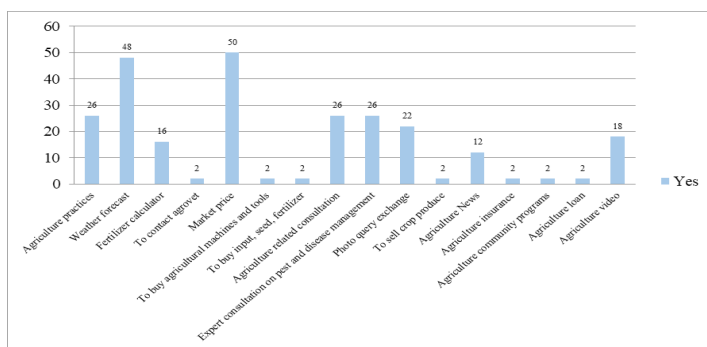
*Implementation Stage*

Rogers (2003) believed that deciding to adopt any new innovation and actually bringing it to practice are two different things. Putting an innovation to use requires behavior change and active participation in part from the users. This stage also determines whether the innovation is further internalized or is terminated. Respondents who used GeoKrishi, 85 percent used it for less than 30 minutes and 15 percent used it between 30 minutes to 1 hour while nobody has used it for more than an hour. Based on the app use data, 48 percent of respondents had used the app for

crop information while 4 percent used it to get advice on livestock farming. Respondents who used the app to get information on livestock, all of them sought information on feed management. Other than that, 1 respondent looked for details on the choice of breed, cattle management and market organization and another used it for health and disease management. Similarly, those who used the app for crop or vegetable farming used it mostly for pest and disease management (38 %) followed by crop care (32 %), crop farming cycle such as for sapling transfer (26 %), crop planning (22 %), soil preparation (22 %), nursery management (18 %), crop harvesting (16 %), fertilizer and bag preparation (16 %), seed planting (14 %), crop processing (12 %), seed sowing (12 %), and plant tilling (8 %). Information on both local market and market outside locality was also searched by 18 percent and 10 percent respectively. Additionally, 12 percent of respondents also used it to know about the estimated budget for crop farming. Similarly, when respondents were asked about other features individually, most of them used the app to check market price, weather forecast, agricultural practices, agriculture consultation, pest and disease consultation, and query with experts.

Out of those respondents who used the app to check the market rate, 88 percent had used it more than 20 times since they started using the app and 12 percent had used it less than 15 times. Few also mentioned that they checked the price almost daily through the app. Similarly, in terms of weather forecast, around 80 percent had used it more than 20 times and around 20 percent had used it less than 10 times. Likewise, of those who have used it to consult with experts, around 8 percent have used it more than 10 times and the rest 92 percent have used it less than 20 times, mostly 5 times. Regarding the query exchange through photos, all of them had used it less than 10 times. Farmers took photos of the problem via the app and sent it to the experts, after

which they would receive a reply within one day but sometimes it also took several days. Some also used the app to watch videos related to agriculture, calculate appropriate amounts of fertilizer, and agricultural news (see Figure 4). Accordingly, the app assisted few to know about agro-vet, how to sell their product, and get information on insurance, loan and community programs.

Figure 4: Mobile application features used by respondents (in %)



Once implementation of an innovation starts, individuals gradually come across different challenges related to its use but they figure out a way to solve such problems as suggested by Rogers (2003). Correspondingly, there were different challenges that the respondents faced while using the app such as difficulty in typing (28 %), skepticism on not being able to register initially (7 %), inability to log in (14 %), and insufficient information or unreliable (25 %) such as inability to get timely information, weather information not according to the area, differences in the name of pesticide that's available in their locality. Few also expressed it would be better if there were refresher training as one day training was not enough. Most of the respondents usually turned to their children for help when they faced difficulties while using the app, while some contacted GeoKrishi as they had their contact number. Apart from that, some of them asked for help from their husband, friend

or neighbor. During this stage, respondents are now more aware of the challenges that they might encounter and ways to solve the problem faced (Rogers, 2003). While some problems are internal to individuals such as digital literacy, individual need, some are household specific such as shared mobile, inadequate space storage as a result of multiple phone users, other problems are external such as issues of mobile network, electricity, internet connection. Likewise, cost of smartphones, recharge card for mobile data, and internet subscription are few reasons that affect farmers' use of the app. This shows that innovation alone does not lead to adoption, but other interrelated variables which Rogers (2003) refer to as technology clusters also play an important role for its use.

*Confirmation Stage*

This stage allows individuals to strengthen the decision that they have made earlier by figuring out the advantages and disadvantages of using the app, which comes only after using the innovation. Thus, satisfaction measures among the respondents who have used the mobile app have been used. Around 93 percent out of the 28 (56 %) farmers who used the app reconfirmed that they would use it in the future as well. Some were willing to use it because their main occupation was agriculture and that they seek new and updated information. Some expressed that they would continue because of their need for information on agricultural practices and techniques. Most suggested the importance of getting updated market price, weather information, pest and disease management, and consultation with the agriculture experts. One respondent also shared that he would keep using the app as he can share information learnt from it to other farmers in the cooperative. On the contrary, around 7 percent of those farmers who adopted it reverted their decision of using it as one of them had decided to discontinue farming but would use it again if she gets back to farming. Similarly, another respondent shared that she gets more relevant information from other sources like

YouTube. Interestingly, those who discontinued using the app, also shared that they are willing to use the app again if they get relevant information, and training to use the app again. Out of 28 active users, around 14 percent were more than satisfied, 46 percent were very satisfied, and approximately 39 percent were satisfied with the app. Despite being vocal about the challenges of using the app, and discontinuance of the app, all 28 respondents indicated satisfaction with the app.

Out of 16 respondents who passively rejected the app without trying it, 43.75 percent expressed their keenness to use it in the future if they were given the training again. Some believed that with the changing digital world, it is imperative to move with technological advancements, whereas few were willing to use it to learn new information that they did not already know about. Few who rejected the app, believed that they were only using traditional methods of farming, as a result, the advanced agricultural application as termed by the respondents, would not be relevant to their needs. This reflects that the user's decision to adopt an innovation does not mean they cannot change that decision. To understand respondent's interest in using the app, their willingness to pay to use the app was asked which resulted in 48 percent responding positively to pay for the app as they thought that the app was beneficial.

**Conclusion**

Digital agro-advisory is considered as an innovation that could change the way farmers had been receiving extension services, from farmer-to-extension ratio, to digitalized source of advisory services and its potential to save time, resources, money, and improve livelihood of farmers through timely market price information, weather forecasts, and crop and livestock management information. Despite various factors that hinder the adoption of agro-advisory, this paper highlights the significant role that service

providers play mainly during the persuasion stage, along with the communication channel used for persuasion, and repeated follow-up sessions to update farmers with the new information provided through the app. Similar to McCampbell et al.(2023), this paper also suggests that multiple approaches of extension should be practiced as pluralistic extension services provide farmers with more choice and decision-making opportunities. Farmers were not only using the conventional extension services but were also gradually being inclined towards the latest digital technologies. Adoption of digital mediums were partially influenced by training as in the case of GeoKrishi, but many farmers also used other e-platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and Messenger for exchange of agricultural information. Moreover, for the adoption of the new technologies and innovation in agro-advisory, agents and stakeholders belonging to a trusted source such as the municipality, cooperatives, local agro-vets, neighbours and family members were imperative.

As evident from other studies as well, mostly the farmers who adopted the app owned a smartphone, had an internet connection, were able to read, type and were capable of navigating through the app. They used it to get information according to their agricultural needs which also provided different opportunities for the farmers in planning and managing their farming activities, enhancing their negotiation power with the traders according to the daily market price available in the app and facilitated farmers to exchange their farm queries with the experts without having to travel. However, limitations of the app included inappropriate weather information or name of the pesticide which would hinder effective planning and execution of farming activities. This study further infers that service providers and policy makers should emphasize customized training programs with refresher training and follow-up training to ensure that farmers understand the process

and have the capability of using such innovations. Along with this, it is important that mobile-based applications go hand-in-hand with other channels that are being used in the local area, so that farmers who cannot use digital technologies still have access to agro-advisory. A systems approach to bringing about desirable change needs strategic engagement of various stakeholders throughout the agro-advisory chain and farmers' social network. Furthermore, to enhance adoption of new innovation, the information on the application and expert consultations should strive to be more reliable, timely and local context specific.

To better understand the type of farmers based on their adoption pattern, further empirical evidence on the actual impact, benefit, and drawbacks of using DAAS should be generated. It is also crucial to dig deeper and investigate why there are many passive rejecters that show less interest in the new innovation, if digital agro-advisory is to be prioritized in the future. If policy-makers are to take DAAS seriously for productivity and sustainability of farming as stated in the strategic papers, then it would be fruitful to pursue further studies to understand ways through which DAAS could be made more smallholder farmer-friendly, cost-effective, convenient, and trust-worthy.

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